SCENES FROM THE REIGN OF LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH



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VELUT
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A. J. Bell
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THE STORM AND ITS PORTENTS

Scenes

FROM

THE REIGN OF LOUIS XVI.

BY

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"BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF CELEBRATED VIOLINISTS," &c.



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Dear Sir

I thank you for your kind letter, and am very glad to learn that my "Scenes from the Reign of Louis XVI" has interested you. The first part of the title "The storm & its portents" was added by Bentley, the publisher, very much against my wishes.

In reply to your question: I have not published any further volume on the period of the French Revolution, but I hope before long to issue a new edition of this work with some important additions.

I write on days when I am not engaged in my Laboratory; I have thus sometimes many weeks together at my disposal for that purpose. With this letter I post to you a little pamphlet with a list of most of my writings up to 1884, since which time I have written a great deal for medical journals in France and England; but I have on hand at present several MS works on various subjects for which I am now seeking publishers; so I trust you may see other volumes of mine some day, and that you will be able to award them also your kind indulgence and generous appreciation.

With best wishes, I am, dear Sir

faithfully yours

T. L. Phipson

Thomas Hutchinson Esq
Pegswood

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PREFACE.

THE present volume, the result of a long residence in France, is a collection of scenes and sketches gathered from many sources, and condensed into as small a space as possible. At the end of the work is given a list of memoirs and publications from which still further interesting details may be gleaned, besides those that have been made use of here. In writing the following pages, it was sought to go a little out of the beaten track and to avoid repeating well known anecdotes of La Fayette, Mirabeau, the Abbé Maury, &c., which are to be found in all works treating of the period of the French Revolution. I trust that many of the sketches in this volume will be new to English readers.

T. L. PHIPSON.

London, 1878.



THE

STORM AND ITS PORTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE more we study the period of the great French Revolution, the more interesting it becomes.

Most works written with a view of giving a concise historical account of the events then enacted, necessarily pass over many important details, many vivid pictures of life and society in France. The numerous series of *Mémoires*, by eminent persons, which have appeared relating to this period, betray so much personal bias that, in perusing them, it is exceedingly difficult to sift truth from exaggeration and absolute falsehood.

Again, these *Mémoires* are so full of heart-rending details, either connected with the writers themselves, or relating to persons intimately known to the authors, that the real state of French society is more or less lost sight of amidst the horrors they depict, and they appeal to our sympathy rather than to our judgment.

In the present work it is my endeavour to avoid these two extremes. I have collected a series of authentic episodes, calculated, I hope, to interest the general reader whilst they may assist the student of history. Many have been taken from sources not easily accessible to English readers; and, whilst striving to avoid accounts teeming with horrors, I have assured myself of the perfect authenticity of every scene and anecdote related in these pages.

It may be doubtful whether the great French Revolution that began so well and ended so tragically, has been of any greater benefit to mankind than to show in the most vivid colours to what height the passions of the human race may be carried under some circumstances. But it is evident that the fearful crisis was brought about by the state of society at, and for some time previous to this particular period of modern history, and the following scenes and sketches

comprised between the years 1770 and 1794, display a number of dramatic incidents and phases of domestic life that may not be entirely devoid of interest either to the historian, the philosopher, or the lover of romance.

In writing the following pages I have adhered to the chronological order of the events here related. None of the episodes are directly connected with each other more than that they form part of one vast whole, the minuter details of which they help to fill up. There is nothing but profit to be got from such study, and the more minutely the period of Louis XVI. is sifted by posterity the more certainly will future generations avoid the reproduction of such disastrous misfortunes as characterized that period. Finally, I may be allowed to state that the whole of these sketches are now published for the first time.

I.

THE CRUSH AFTER THE MARRIAGE.

HIS Royal Highness the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XVI, married Marie Antoinette of Austria on the 16th of May, 1770. On the 31st of May the city of Paris determined to celebrate this marriage by a splendid *fête*, during which the Rue Royale became the scene of a most alarming and tragical incident, entirely ascribed to the bad management of the town councillors, and other "authorities" upon whom the various arrangements depended.

We have few examples in history of such utter carelessness and mismanagement. People at first laughed at the idea of the said *fête*, but their laughter was soon to be turned into cries of grief. Between the trees of the Rue Royale and the Boulevard, stalls had been erected for a kind

of fancy fair, similar to what we see now-a-days at Paris on the 1st of January. The fair, according to Duclos' account was mournful and insipid to the last degree. The Boulevard was lighted by means of small lanterns hung upon the trees at short intervals, and they did little more than shed a very dull kind of illumination. It was also arranged that a display of fireworks should take place in the newly made Place Louis XV, after which all the colonnades of the Place, and, in fact, all the houses in Paris were to be illuminated. For this purpose, a wooden scaffolding, of a very poor description, was erected, not facing the river as it should have been, but facing the Rue Royale; so that only those spectators placed in this comparatively narrow street could see the display; the vast crowd outside being only able to witness the back of it.

Now at this period the Rue Royale was a new street; it was not finished, was only partly paved, and on each side were large ditches, dug either for placing water pipes, or, with the object of causing carriages to drive only in the middle of the street, where the pavement was newly laid.

In spite of the exceedingly fine weather, the fireworks were a failure; the scaffolding caught

fire, and it was necessary to send for the engines to extinguish it. These engines could only reach the spot by the Rue Royale, which caused no little embarassment, crowded as it was by spectators. After this, the people in the Boulevard wished to get into the Rue Royale to see the illuminations; whilst those in the Rue Royale endeavoured to get on to the Boulevard for the same purpose. The result was a fearful amount of crushing and pushing, such as had never before been witnessed in Paris, or perhaps, anywhere else. At this critical moment, according to Grimm, several carriages made their way into the street, and some of them were drawn by six or eight horses. The populace, in order to avoid them, moved suddenly from the centre of the street towards the sides, thus pushing those at the sides into the ditches already referred to. The scene which now ensued baffles all description. The noise and confusion, the shrieks of the women and shouts of the men, mixed with the groans and imprecations of the wounded and dying, were frightful.

Many of the aristocracy risked their lives by quitting their carriages and escaping on foot. Some of the soldiers present acted with great presence of mind and gallantry, saving the lives of

many people ; but several of these men themselves were also crushed to death. The whole night was occupied in collecting and extricating the dead and the wounded. Duclos says that one hundred and thirty-three of the corpses were interred in the cemetery of the Madeleine, where, twenty-three years later, the remains of Louis XVI. himself were deposited. As for the wounded taken to the hospitals and to their own homes, their numbers were never exactly ascertained ; there must have been many thousands, for Grimm tells us that "over a thousand died from the effects of this fearful crush."

The day after the catastrophe (1st of June 1770) the Dauphin received his usual monthly allowance of 6,000 francs. Without losing a moment, he wrote to the lieutenant of police, M. de Sartignes :

"I have heard of the misfortune that occurred last night. I am inconsolable. They have just brought me the sum which the king allows me every month ; it is all I can dispose of, I send it to you, devote it to the unfortunate. You know the esteem in which I hold you.

(Signed) "LOUIS AUGUSTE."

II.

A STORY OF THE PERIOD.

AT the commencement of the reign of Louis XVI. there was an extraordinary story which went the round of the Paris *salons*, and cannot, we think, fail to interest many persons in these days of Spiritualism and mysteries. It had nothing to do, perhaps, with the outbreak of the revolution, but, when we know how fashionable this story became, how often it was repeated, and how carefully it has been preserved by the Baron de Bézenval, it gives some idea of the things that were listened to and credited in those days.

A young gentleman, M. de Saint André, afterwards a lieutenant-general in the Army, had taken his place in the *diligence* going from Strasburg to Paris, and on the journey formed the acquain-

tance of a young man about his own age, with whom he soon became very intimate. Monsieur de Saint André was a tall, fine looking man, of rather stern aspect; he never laughed, though fond of gaiety and accused of having perpetrated many acts of extravagance.

It was not long before he discovered that this young companion, whose name has not come down to us, was engaged to be married; that the lady of his choice was the only daughter of an old friend of his father, and possessed of considerable fortune; that, in fact, he was on his way to Paris to get married.

M. de Saint André was afterwards informed with much detail, by his loquacious and enthusiastic fellow-traveller, of all the circumstances of his engagement, of the position of his future father-in-law, and of his own family. On arriving at Paris they both put up at the Hôtel d'Angleterre in the Rue de Richelieu. Very shortly after their arrival the young stranger was attacked by a violent inflammation of the bowels, which got worse and worse, and actually carried him off in the space of a very few hours.

Saint André had done everything that even a relative could have done to save his young friend, but all in vain. He was very much afflicted by

his loss, and his conscience told him that his peculiar position at this critical moment entailed certain duties towards the deceased, which duties he at once set about. Knowing that his unfortunate young friend was expected that very morning by his future father-in-law, he provided himself with all the papers he found in the pockets and portfolio of the deceased, and proceeded to the house of the said gentleman, with the intention of placing these papers in his hands, and informing him of the dreadful occurence.

So far, so good; and those excellent intentions would, no doubt, have been carried out to the letter, had not circumstances been too much for Saint André on this extraordinary occasion. On arriving at the house of the father-in-law, the servants, who had been informed of the expected visit of the future bridegroom, had no difficulty in persuading themselves that Saint André was the man in question. They ran to the host to make known the auspicious event, and before our hero could open his mouth, he found himself tightly embraced in the arms of the proprietor of the residence. What is more, the latter actually pulled the young man into the room, and pre-

sented him to his wife and daughter as the future husband of the latter, before a word of explanation could escape Saint André's lips.

All this was too much for the facetious character of M. de Saint André; he allowed himself to be carried away by the event of the moment, delivered the letters of introduction, replied correctly to all the questions, being well posted during the journey by his youthful friend. Moreover, in spite of himself, he made violent love to the daughter, who was decidedly a handsome girl. In a little time dinner was announced, and Saint André was seated next to *his* intended, whilst perfect joy lit up the features of the father and mother. As for the young lady; she was very reserved, spoke little, blushed often, and replied very briefly to questions.

After dinner the conversation took a more animated and serious cast. The details of the marriage, the settlements, &c., were entered into, and in the very middle of this animated conversation our hero took up his hat and prepared to leave the room.

"Where are you going?" exclaimed the host.

"I have some pressing business that obliges me to quit you at once," replied the other.

"How can that be—how can you have any pressing business in a town which you have never seen before, and in which you do not know a soul?"

"All that is quite true, but, nevertheless, it is absolutely necessary that I should go."

"Oh! I see what you wish. You are going to the bank to get some money. Now, is it likely that I should allow you to be in want of funds? I have plenty here at your service. Besides, if you wish to present any drafts, or to open an account, one of my clerks shall do it for you."

"No, it is not precisely that," interrupted Saint André, "it is an affair in which my presence is absolutely indispensible."

And whilst pronouncing these words he had moved decidedly towards the door of the apartment. Another moment and he was in the breakfast-room adjoining, whither he was at once followed by the father-in-law.

"Now that we are alone, and as the ladies cannot overhear our conversation," said Saint André, "I may tell you that this morning, shortly before arriving here, an accident happened to me. I was attacked by a violent fit of inflammation, of which I died in the course of a few hours. I have given my word of honour

that I will be interred at six o'clock precisely, and I cannot break my word."

This discourse, as may be supposed, had an extraordinary effect upon the father-in-law, who thought the idea so extremely extravagant, that he yielded to a fit of uproarious laughter, and was some time before he could explain the cause of it to the ladies. In the meantime Saint André went out. In the house they continued to discuss this incomprehensible joke, as they termed it, until six o'clock struck, and then seven, and the young man never returned.

At half-past seven the father-in-law, becoming impatient, sent a servant to the Hôtel d'Angleterre to hear what had become of the young gentleman just arrived from Strasburg. As the servant mentioned the name of the right person, the reply that he took back to his master plunged the family in the deepest of mysteries. The reply was, that the young man had arrived at the Hôtel at nine o'clock in the morning, that he died at eleven, and was buried at six o'clock in the evening.

III.

THE ROBBERY AT LUCIENNES.

ON the morning of the 20th of April, 1779, the Countess du Barri was sitting alone in her apartments, when she was informed that three persons wished to see her. They brought an introduction from the Princess Sapicha, a beautiful Polish lady, as elegant in mind and manners as she was in person. It appears from the Memoirs of Madame du Barri herself, that she had not long been acquainted with this charming princess, but as the intimacy had been contracted since the death of her royal consort Louis XV., and the consequent change in Madame du Barri's fortune, it was supposed to be a purely disinterested friendship.

The three gentlemen were admitted. One, who seemed to be the principal, was of middle

age, neither remarkable for beauty nor for want of it; he wore an enormously large patch on one cheek, and a cross of the order of St. Louis hung on his breast. His companions were rather better looking, but appeared to labour under a constrained manner, leading their hostess to believe that they found themselves in a somewhat new and strange situation.

The Countess invited them to be seated; but they respectfully declined. The person who wore the cross of St. Louis then apprised her that he was the bearer of a private message of the utmost importance from the Princess Sapicha, in which her interests were much concerned, and that he would fain speak to her without fear of interruption.

"But these gentlemen?" inquired the Countess.

"They are merely two Lithuanians, Madame," replied the Chevalier, "who understand but very little of the French language, but as they had an ardent desire to see so beautiful and celebrated a lady as yourself, the princess kindly allowed me to bring them with me."

This piece of flattery appears to have been too much for the handsome Countess. She made no further objection, but rose from her chair and

passed into an adjoining boudoir, followed by the Chevalier.

The latter had no sooner entered the little apartment than he carefully closed the door; whether he turned the key in the lock or not, we are not informed. Nevertheless, this act of precaution produced in the Countess a feeling of mistrust and uneasiness, which was by no means diminished by what followed. She inquired in a hurried tone of voice what his pressing business might be.

The stranger advanced towards her with a respectful bow, and after eyeing each other for a moment he began:—

"You are somewhat imprudent, Madame, thus to trust yourself in the hands of persons whose very names are unknown to you; and this want of caution on your part will meet with its proper reward."

"What is the meaning of that language?" exclaimed the Countess, highly alarmed.

"Merely a trifle," continued the visitor, drawing from his pocket a large pistol, which the coward pointed at her breast; "all you have to do, Madame, is to deliver up to me at once your money and jewels. My companions will prevent any persons from approaching through your

apartment, and you are beyond the possibility of rescue. For your own sake I conjure you to comply without delay to my demand."

Overcome with terror, the poor woman uttered an incoherent prayer for mercy, and gave herself up for lost—whilst the ruffian continued: "No delay, Madame, your life or mine depends upon the dispatch of a moment."

A glance at the wretch's face convinced Madame du Barri that he was quite equal to fulfilling his horrible threat. One thought alone consoled her, that her diamonds were out of his reach in an iron safe outside the boudoir; but in her secretaire, or writing desk, there was a casket of jewels which she was in the habit of wearing, with some forty thousand francs. These, together with some gold coin, the whole amounting to sixty thousand livres (or £2,400) she handed over to the villain, who eagerly grasped his prize, filled his pockets, and those of his wretched associates who, by this time, presented themselves at the door of the boudoir. Then leading the terrified Countess back to the other apartment, they compelled her to sit in a large arm chair, to which they bound her with handkerchiefs so tightly as to cause considerable pain.

"Do not utter a single cry," said the detestable ruffian, "for the space of a quarter of an hour; if you do, you are lost; there is a person in your household who is engaged with us in this affair, and he will secure his safety and ours at any price, even that of your life."

The villains then departed. Whether there was any truth in what had just been pronounced could never be discovered. The Countess, more dead than alive, was left in the chair, and did not dare to utter a cry till the prescribed period had elapsed.

This occurred at Luciennes, some distance from Paris, in a country house occupied by the Countess du Barri at that time. The whole place was soon in an uproar, as the news of what had occurred got mooted about. The police made active search; but all that was discovered consisted of three coats found in a wood near Luciennes, one of which had the cross of St. Louis attached to it.

IV.

A PRACTICAL EXPERIMENT.

AN anecdote which has been preserved by Condorcet, and another which belongs also to the period of which we write, give some idea of the gaiety of the upper classes about 1780. It was about the spring of that year that M. de Montesquieu made a bet with one of his noble friends, that if any one went into the public streets and offered to sell real gold pieces at two francs each, no one would buy them.

After arranging the bet a man was sent on to one of the public squares, with a certain number of gold coins, and was instructed to shout out in a loud voice "Real gold pieces at two francs each!—who will buy?" After a little time had elapsed a crowd began to gather round him, which got larger and larger. The people opened

their eyes and their ears, they looked at the gold pieces, touched them; some were audacious enough to cause them to ring against the stones of the pavement, but they invariably handed them back to the seller. They were not to be deceived by appearances! The cleverest persons in the crowd openly stated that they saw clearly all the pieces were false. Some declared that, nevertheless, they were very well imitated. Others said that the sound of the ring on the stones was quite sufficient to pronounce them bad; and that instead of being worth two francs, it would be difficult to sell them again at half that sum.

At last, after bawling for about an hour, the man had succeeded, with great difficulty, in disposing of *four* gold coins of the realm, at the price of two francs (one shilling and eightpence) each; and these were no doubt purchased by some rascals who imagined that, in the dusk of the evening, they might cause them to pass for *real* pieces; more especially if they were mixed up with a few good ones!

* * * * * *

The other anecdote, which may be looked upon as an indication of "gaiety before the tragedy" is told of the young Duc d'Aumont, who, it is

said, owed more to nature than to art. Rising from bed one morning he was overheard, whilst looking into his mirror, to exclaim :

"D'Aumont, my friend, God has made you a gentleman, the King has made you a duke, now do something yourself in your turn—shave, and make yourself clean."

It is exceedingly remarkable that as matters got worse and worse, this natural gaiety of the French people of all classes never forsook them. Many lives were saved by an appropriate joke delivered at the proper moment. When the mob talked of hanging the Abbé Maury at a lamp-post "Mes enfants," said he, "y verrez-vous plus clair quand vous m'aurez mis à la lanterne ?" About the same time when the Archbishop of Toulouse was about to be burnt in effigy on the Pont Neuf, and the torches were all ready to light the fire beneath the lay figure, a poor abbé chanced to be espied in the crowd. "Oh ! oh !" cried the mob, "here is the confessor !" Thereupon the priest was pushed forward and commanded to hear the confession of the lay figure. "Confess him, Monsieur l'Abbé," cried the roughs, "we will give him five minutes." Thereupon roars of laughter and all kinds of obscene remarks both from the men and the women. A ladder was brought and the poor

abbé, in spite of all resistance, was compelled to take his place beside the stuffed effigy, with every probability of feeling the stinging flames himself, if not of being killed outright by the excited mob. He saved himself by a joke. Standing upon the steps of the ladder he saluted the crowd by raising his cocked hat, and said "Gentlemen, I am quite willing to listen to the confession of the culprit, but if I undertake this task he will have so much to say to me that you will never be able to burn him to-night!" Thereupon great roars of laughter, during which the abbé descended and managed to withdraw from the crowd without further molestation.

Another ludicrous incident is connected with the appearance at the bar of the Assembly of "a deputation of the human races," supposed to represent the whole world, and demanding permission to render homage to the "immortal decrees" of the said Assembly. According to Beaulieu all these people were hired for the occasion, and a certain Duc de L—— was charged with the payment of them. Next day, one of them mistaking the name of the duke, called on M. de Biencourt, and being asked what he wanted said, "Sir, it was I that did the Chaldean at the National Assembly, and I want the twelve

francs that were promised." He was told to apply to the Duc de Liancourt.

Much later, when the King's aunts had thought proper to fly, and the rest of the Royal Family were thinking of doing likewise, the fish-women of Paris came in a mass to Monsieur, the brother of the King, and obliged him to give due assurance that he had no intention of leaving Paris. Having done this, one of the women said: "But if the King should leave us, you would remain would you not?" It was an awkward question. Shrugging his shoulders Monsieur replied: "For a clever and witty woman that is a most stupid question to ask!" on which all the women burst into laughter, and left the Luxembourg quite satisfied.

V.

THE ANTIQUARIANS AT FAULT.

WITHIN the last fifty years Raspail and others have—not without some semblance of truth—found great fault with the doings of the Paris Academy of Sciences, and other such learned bodies. In some instances Raspail was decidedly in the right, but few will give credence to much that he has written, since his own scientific observations are frequently open to much criticism, and in many cases his assertions are positively erroneous. *Errare humanum est*, is true enough; but those who find fault with others should use every endeavour not to err themselves. These considerations have more than once deterred right-minded and clever people from exposing the shortcomings and intrigues of our own learned societies—they

might, indeed, just as well grumble at a Railway Company, as far as the good produced by such manifestations, usually goes.

Nevertheless it did happen, as we shall see presently, that the most learned Academy of Inscriptions, in Paris, got rather a severe lesson in the never-to-be-forgotten Academic year 1779—80.

At that date some excavations were being made in the extensive lime quarries of Bellevue, not very far from the spot where now stands the old chemical manufactory of Javelle—which was erected in the year that the celebrated Lavoisier made known his discoveries relating to oxygen gas, as the date above the doors still testifies—and still nearer to the much frequented hydropathic establishment on the hill overlooking the river. During the excavations to which we refer, these lime quarries had yielded up a treasure in the shape of a stone bearing distinct traces of several Roman characters.

If it was not the philosopher's stone, all we can say is, that it ought to have been—considering the vast amount of conversation of which it subsequently became the object both to philosophers and others. The celebrated *lapis solaris* dis-

covered by the old Italian cobbler Casciarolo, which shed out a soft ethereal light in dark places after having been exposed to the solar rays, never produced more excitement among the curious than did the block of limestone, with Roman characters, brought to light in the quarries of Bellevue a few years previous to the outbreak of the Revolution.

The characters were distinctly separate, and had no apparent connection with each other. They were Roman characters—there was no doubt of that.

The members of the Academy having assembled to consider the matter, the meeting resulted in an order to the Secretary to request permission of the Government to have this antique stone placed at their disposal. This was granted, and an order signed by the King, the effect of which was that the precious relic of past ages was transported at no little expense and trouble to the Louvre, and duly installed under the eyes of the learned geologists and antiquarians of the Institute.

A contemporary informs us that the block of stone was received with all due honour, and that a committee was immediately formed consisting of M. de la Curne, the Abbé Barthélemy, Dupuy

(the Secretary), M. de Bréginguy, M. Auquetel and M. Kéralio. These gentlemen laboured with the most unremitting zeal to discover the meaning of the Roman inscriptions, but without success. It is stated that each member of the Committee found a separate key to the enigma, and expounded its signification after his own fashion.

As men get older they should become more careful in their conclusions, on arriving at the "years of wisdom" they should have learnt how infinite are the works of Nature, and how feeble our interpretation of them. Yet how many persons we find who seem to know everything or, at least, induce their contemporaries to believe so! How painful it is to see a man grown grey in the cause of science, still struggling to get his particular ideas adopted by the world, to the exclusion of all others. Let him take his scalpel, his microscope, or his chemical balance and discover new facts. These will remain to the glory of his name, but his own particular views of Nature and her doings will perish like the froth upon the ocean wave. How small does the physiologist appear in our eyes when he is found incapable of explaining why the vegetable cell in one plant invariably remains spherical, and in

another, as invariably, grows out into a long tube! This, the simplest and most common of all phenomena is yet unexplained by the most learned. Yet our baby astronomers are pretending to analyse the Sun!

However the Academicians all concurred in one thing, namely, that the Roman characters upon the stone were merely initials. At this juncture they decided to consult with M. de Gebelin, the author of a work entitled "Le Monde primitif," and well known to be deeply skilled in ancient languages. But he either could not or would not devote any time to this affair. In the meanwhile the wonderful discovery at Bellevue became the one engrossing topic of conversation in Paris. The Roman characters traced upon the stone were copied on to hand-screens and chimney ornaments; they found their way into ladies' albums, and entire evenings were spent in endeavouring to solve the mystery—the "all-defying enigma" as it was termed.

It was during this fever of excitement and curiosity, wholely traceable to the proceedings of the learned Fellows of the Academy, that the old beadle of the parish of Montmartre not only heard of the matter—who had *not* heard

of it?—but actually professed to be able to solve the mystery and inquired whether the Academy had offered any prize on the subject. The characters upon the stone stood nearly as follows:

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In the course of a short time the old beadle was introduced by a mutual friend to one of the Academicians, who laughed when he heard his story, and introduced him to another member of the learned society, who laughed also. It ended in the beadle receiving an invitation to make a statement before the Committee. This he had no objection to do, and we have it from a well-known author of the period, that the exact words, as they dropped from his lips, were as nearly as possible to the following effect:—"Gentlemen, I am but a poor beadle of the

parish of Montmartre, and perhaps an ignorant fellow besides, but I am an old man well acquainted with the history of the Bellevue Quarries, in which I formerly worked, and I have to state that near the spot where this stone was found, and in the same part of the quarry, it was once the custom to sell out the lime to persons who brought asses laden with baskets to carry it away. Now, as those who conducted these animals did not always know the precise road they should take to reach the lime pits, a stonecutter engraved the one you have before you in his own rude manner and according to his own fancy, as a sort of guide to the donkey-drivers, who soon became well acquainted with the marks. You will see, in fact, that on beginning by the first letter, and reading straight on, it makes: *Ici le chemin des ânes*."

As the old man made known this discovery, the members of the committee stood dumbfounded, looking at each other with undisguised amazement.

A talented lady writing from Paris on the subject says: "Only conceive, my dear friend, the confusion of the learned Academicians, and the unextinguishable mirth of the public when in-

formed of the discovery brought about by this modern Daniel. It kept us in constant laughter for nearly a fortnight, and for almost double that period the wise heads which had been so long puzzled with this block were compelled to hide themselves."

VI.

A DRIVE IN THE COUNTRY ON ASH WEDNESDAY, 1780.

AT no time of the year are men's spirits more lively than on the advent of Spring. Almost every poet of distinction has had something to say about this regenerating season of the year. Memoirs of the time tell us that on Ash Wednesday, 1780, the Prince de Lambesc, with his brother, and the Princess de Vaudemont were returning from the country in a carriage drawn by six horses, when they overtook a procession consisting of a number of priests carrying extreme unction to a dying man.

The postilion, from natural impulse, or from religious veneration, pulled up his horses, but the surly coachman was apparently of a different mind, and commenced flogging his animals violently, compelling the others to move forward in so rapid a manner that one of the priests in the

procession was thrown down and trampled under the horse's feet "*to the great amusement of the young noblemen in the carriage.*"

A compact crowd soon collected, however, and the enraged multitude was by no means disposed to take the same view of things. Several persons pursued the carriage, throwing stones at the drivers and making use of very violent language.

It is probable that the riders would scarcely have escaped with their lives, had not both postilion and coachman urged the horses to their utmost speed.

The wounded priest was raised from the ground and carried to his convent, not very far distant, where he was placed under the care of a surgeon, who pronounced his recovery extremely doubtful. The members of the brotherhood of St. Paul, to which he belonged, lost no time in making a report of the occurrence to the Archbishop, insisting upon the enormous sacrilege that had been committed, and mentioning the names of the noble party in the carriage. The Archbishop, it appears, contented himself by merely writing to the Countess de Brienne who, fearing the consequences of so flagrant an offence, at once gave orders for the dismissal of the coachman, and then hastened to the convent,

where she succeeded in hushing the matter up, by settling an annuity of some two hundred francs (about £8) upon the wounded priest, together with the assurance of her protection. "Thus ended an affair," says a contemporary writer, "which under the reign of Louis XV. would have been visited with the utmost rigour of the law, aided by the royal displeasure, which would in all probability have banished from the kingdom the Prince de Lambesc and his sacrilegious companion. But, alas! his excellent and pious grandson was already beginning to feel himself a king in nothing but the name." Of course, we make due allowance for the writer's personal bias in all this. Matters would have happened just the same in the reign of Louis XV. as in that of Louis XVI.

VII.

PREJUDICE PUNISHED.

IT will be our fault if the little sketches contained in these pages do not teach more than one important lesson to some of our contemporaries. All historians, worthy of the name, have perceived that one century has instructed the following, not only in science and art, but in politics and philosophy. And surely no more active period of instruction for the nineteenth century could have existed, than that of the eighteenth.

Most persons will admit with us, that of all the degradations of literature few things surpass unjust criticism. Even ignorant criticism cannot be pardoned, for those who are called upon to judge the works of others should be, at the very least, men of education and devoid of prejudice. But what are we to say to ignorant and impudent censure combined? or, to that species of vicious writing in

which an author is praised or condemned according as his work falls into the hands of a friend or an enemy?

By all means, as Cervantes says, "*let us adhere to the straight line.*"

These remarks were suggested to us on reading a little anecdote which is told of the Duchess de Polignac. It can be related in a very few words, and the moral it conveys will never be forgotten.

In the year 1780, Madame la Duchesse de Polignac was in a delicate state of health, and in order to be as near the Queen as possible, she begged the well-known Madame de Boufflers to allow her to rent her house at Auteuil for the summer. This house was very agreeably situated, quite out of the noise and dust of Paris, and, moreover, had a beautiful little garden laid out in the English fashion, which was universally admired. It is on record that many persons, and some strangers, visited Madame de Boufflers expressly to see her charming garden; it was a matter of curiosity both to friends and acquaintances, at all times of the year.

It may well be supposed that this lady attached no small value to the charming little property, and that nothing could induce her to give up the possession of it, even for the

short space of one summer. At the same time, being a person of obliging disposition, she did not like to refuse the request of the Duchesse in an abrupt manner. After thinking the matter over for some time, she finally replied to Madame de Polignac's letter, by sending her the following lines of poetry :—

> " Tout ce que vous voyez conspire à vos désirs,
> Vos jours toujours sereins coulent dans les plaisirs ;
> L'empire en est pour vous l'inépuisable source ;
> Ou, si quelque chagrin en interrompt la course,
> Le courtisan, soigneux de les entretenir,
> S'empresse à l'effacer de votre souvenir.
> Moi je suis seule ici, quelque ennui qui me presse,
> Je n'en vois dans mon sort aucun qui s'intéresse,
> Et n'ai pour tout plaisir, Madame, que ces fleurs,
> Dont le parfum exquis vient charmer mes douleurs."

This delicate refusal to grant her request may have somewhat ruffled Madame de Polignac, in spite of the exceedingly charming nature of the verses in which it was conveyed. These she showed to several friends, who, in order, perhaps, to flatter the Duchesse, condemned the production in no measured language. One and all agreed that the verses were very bad, not to say abominable, and that Madame de Boufflers " ought to be ashamed

of herself for writing such trash," or something very much to that effect.

In course of time this most vicious piece of criticism came to the ears of Madame de Boufflers herself. All that the lady replied on this occasion was: "I am truly sorry, then, for poor Racine, for they are *his* verses, not mine." In fact, they occur in "Britannicus," act ii. sc. iii., as Condorcet has pointed out.

Madame de Boufflers had been most fortunate in the choice of these beautiful lines, for nothing could have better represented the repective positions occupied by the two ladies.

Voltaire says there are many kinds of ignorance, but that the worst kind of all is ignorant criticism. A critic, he asserts, is bound to be doubly in the right; first, as a man who affirms a thing, and secondly as a man who condemns.

VIII.

THE PASTRY-COOK POET.

IN the short space of time embraced by this work, many and brilliant were the names that appeared in the world of literature, art, and science.

All the reasoning of Voltaire, all the sweetness of Florian, the science of Buffon and Lavoisier, the music of Glück, Piccini and Monsigny, were not sufficient to soften the brutal feelings of mankind and avert the diabolical atrocities of the great Revolution!

In the musical and dramatic arts Paris was favoured beyond measure at this period. Piccini, Grétry, Glück, Catel, Monsigny, Nicolo, Dalayrac, and a little later, Spontini, Cherubini, and Paesiello, among the brilliant *cortége* of composers; Sophie Arnould, Madame de St.

Huberty, Madame St. Aubin, Mademoiselle Maillard, Martin, Elleviou, Michu, Gavaudin, among the singers; Mademoiselle Dugazon, Dumesnil, Clairon, Lange, &c., among the actresses; and Mademoiselle Guimard as principal *danseuse*,* who rode in a carriage and pair, and gave "three suppers every week, one to the nobility, the second to men of letters and philosophers, the third to comedians and all the rabble of the theatre."

Each name might afford the subject matter of a volume!

Among the writers we have Favart—the pastry-cook poet. Who does not know the Rue Favart in Paris? How many know anything about the man?

Favart was born in Paris, of very humble, though honourable parentage, on the 13th November, 1710. His father was a gay, witty fellow, and determined to give his son a good education on the condition that, when he was wanted to attend to the baking, he should return to the paternal ovens. His mother

* In 1789, Mademoiselle Guimard was engaged for a season in London; it was whispered "that she was nearly sixty years of age, but looked a charming sprite before the foot-lights." In reality she was exactly forty-six, being born in 1743.

found him books to read in the few leisure moments he possessed, and he soon acquired a very strong taste for literature in general. Added to this, his father took him occasionally to the Opéra Comique—the theatre which best suited his own gay disposition.

One of the boy's professors at the Collège Louis le Grand was Rollin, the historian, whose lectures he was attending when his father died, and he was obliged to put an end to his classical studies. He set vigorously to work to support his afflicted mother, both by the baking ovens and by his pen. His first poem on the subject of "Joan of Arc" won for him "The Violet" in the *Académie des Jeux Floraux*—that was already something, but it did not tempt him to abandon the paternal shop.

Long after this, when he had written some half-dozen *libretti* for the Opéra Comique, he used to imagine his work was only worth burning—at the end of the last verse of an opera he had just finished, he frequently wrote the words: "good for lighting the oven with."

It is said by competent judges that his literature, like his pastry, was a queer mixture of "good, bad and indifferent." As with

the cakes, so the verses sometimes wanted a little salt or spice, forgotten in the hurry of the moment. One day he gave the public his "Deux Jumelles," and this rather indifferent opera met with a wonderful success.

He rushed back to his mother, overcome with joy at the result. "Ah!" exclaimed the good woman, "it never rains, but it pours—and here is a large order just come from Madame la Duchesse—no less than an entire supper for this very evening!"

Poor Favart passed his hand over his brow as if to assure himself whether or no the laurels of the poet were really there, whilst his mother brought him his cotton cap and his apron. There he was in a few moments, hard at work, manufacturing *pâtés*, *méringues* and *fanfreluches*.

A handsome carriage and pair pulls up at the door. The good woman, with three profound bows, introduces no less a personage than a Fermier-général, and then flies to the back of the shop to adjust her toilette a little. Favart rubs the flour from his hands and advances boldly towards the new-comer. The latter spoke first.

"I have come to speak to Monsieur Favart,

the author of the opera I have just heard at the theatre."

Instead of replying boldly, "I am Monsieur Favart—do you want cakes or verses?" the pastry-cook for once lost his presence of mind, pretended that he was only the boy of the shop and answered meekly:

"Yes, Monseigneur, I will call Monsieur Favart immediately."

In a few instants he returned hastily brushed and dressed. "Here I am, Monsieur,"—no longer "Monseigneur,"—"I have only just come in from the theatre; what might you desire?"

"First of all," said the Fermier-général, "let us put aside all this humbug and *incognito*." Favart turned pale. "I learnt at the Opera that the author of Les Deux Jumelles had no money. Now, I am money itself personified; to-morrow there is a dramatic *fête* at my house, and I want you to arrange matters for me."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Favart, thinking of the supper for the Duchesse, and throwing a furtive glance in the direction of the ovens. However, it ended by Favart jumping into the carriage with his strange friend, and supping at his house.

Whether Madame la Duchesse got her supper

history does not say; but from that moment Favart's fortune was made, and he managed to enjoy life till the 12th of May, 1792. Some of his operas have outlived him; his piece called "Les Trois Sultanes" was performed in Paris only the other day.

Then there was his excellent wife, Madame Favart, the celebrated singer, who in the very opera just named was the first who dared to introduce the real Turkish costume upon the stage. Her sultana dress was made in Constantinople expressly for the occasion. Many tried to laugh at her, but she gained the day. When she married Favart, he was manager of the Opéra Comique and the pastry-cook's shop had passed into other hands. The Maréchal de Saxe, commander-in-chief of the French armies, who had a kind of theatre connected with the camp, had tried hard to captivate her but did not succeed.

Madame Favart was a charming singer and actress, and a most accomplished musician. She died comparatively young, long before her husband, to whom she proved a very devoted wife under the most arduous of circumstances.

We have said that our pastry-cook poet made his *début* by carrying off "The Violet" at the

Académie des Jeux Floraux for his poem on " Joan of Arc." This Academy was a very old institution, founded in 1324, or thereabouts, in the town of Toulouse. The town had long possessed a literary club or society, the origin of which is unknown; it was already an old institution in 1323 when it bore the title of *Collége du gai Savoir*, and was composed of seven poets and a president. They conferred degrees,—love degrees—bachelors and doctors, "in love," and taught the principles of the poet's art in their *legs d'amors.** In 1323 this society sent a rhymed invitation to all poets of the *Langue d'Oc* (Languedoc) to compete for a prize which would be decerned on the 3rd of May, 1324, to the author of the best poem. The prize consisted of a "Violet" worked in fine gold filagree. On this occasion it was carried off by Arnaud Vidal. The town of Toulouse charmed with the *éclat* produced by this poetical competition, decided upon making it a permanent institution, and to supply a Golden Violet for this purpose every year. This has done much to encourage French poetry. Other prizes were occasionally added to the "Violet;" they were other flowers; but

* "*Las legs d'amors*," les lois d'amour.

"The Violet," gained by Favart, was the highest reward.

It may interest our readers to know that this Academy still flourishes. In the present year no less than seven hundred and twelve productions, both in verse and in prose, were sent in to the "Concours des Jeux Floraux," but the verse carried off all the flowers; only honourable mention being awarded to the more distinguished prose works.

IX.

CAGLIOSTRO AND THE COUNTESS DU BARRI.

BETWEEN 1781 and 1789 Paris was infested with various kinds of adventurers who concealed their knavery under the mask of science. Some of these were so clever that they not only received large sums of money from the number of persons whom they duped, but managed to wriggle themselves into the very highest society. In this respect, two foreigners were more conspicuous than the rest; one was Mesmer, who had a certain knowledge of hysteria and nervous effects; the other was Cagliostro, who appears to have been a perfect charlatan of the most impudent character.

Mesmer came from Germany, styled himself a "professor," and lectured to crowded audiences upon "animal magnetism." Many looked upon him as an extraordinary and superior being.

He demanded large sums of money to explain what he termed his new discoveries, and he professed to cure all kinds of diseases by his magnetic passes, &c. The whole nature of his proceedings is now well known,* but in his day the nervous effects which he made use of had been very little studied, and animal magnetism soon became quite the rage in Paris.

The Countess du Barri was discoursing one evening with several friends, upon the doings of the said professor, when the Cardinal de Rohan, who happened to be present, remarked that he would bring forward some much more wonderful things than any related that evening, and added: "I am acquainted with a personage able to afford you a view into those unknown regions where man in his present state has never penetrated." The Cardinal alluded to Cagliostro.

The Cardinal de Rohan was either a great fool or a great knave, some think he combined a little of each of these qualities. He was Bishop of Strasburg when Cagliostro, who styled himself a "Count," somehow became acquainted with him, and the fame of the impostor in France

* See Phipson, "Familiar Letters on some Mysteries of Nature," Fourth Letter, London, 1876; and Carpenter in "Fraser's Magazine," February, 1877.

spread from that town soon afterwards. Both the Cardinal and the "Count" were implicated in the celebrated affair of the diamond necklace, of which more presently. Whether De Rohan was in league with the impostors of the period, or was simply duped by them is uncertain; but, in the latter case, he must have shut his eyes to a great deal of roguery which most men would have seen through easily.

On the present occasion he excited the curiosity of the company so much, that the Countess du Barri gave him permission to introduce this Cagliostro to her.

The result was, that in the course of the day, the Cardinal de Rohan conducted to her house a man of about forty years of age, or perhaps older, for, as she says, "his physiognomy had an indescribable something in it which baffled conjecture." He was handsome although slightly wrinkled, and his large prominent eyes sparkled with intelligence at once penetrating and malicious. He was dressed with more magnificence than taste; on his fingers and under his chin he wore some superb diamonds. His hands were moreover decorated with several antique gems or cameos, a number of which were suspended from

his watch chain. The head of his cane was set with a profusion of fine emeralds, and ruffles of the most costly lace completed his costume. He spoke French with a decided Italian accent.

He was presented by the Cardinal de Rohan as "the Count de Cagliostro—a nobleman travelling for his pleasure,"—"and," interrupted the impostor, "to assist the cause of humanity." Madame du Barri speaks of the impression he made upon her at this first interview, in the following terms: "To me he seemed to have the air of a *mere itinerant mountebank*, and his style of conversation although good in itself, was emphatic but not natural; he seemed to deal out his words in an obscure and sententious form, as if he imagined himself perfectly oracular; it was necessary upon all occasions to admit whatever he advanced, for the least attempt at argument closed his lips in utter silence. I had seen sufficient of the world to form a tolerably correct estimate of this man, who seemed to have gained so completely on the credulity of the Cardinal, but knowing how vain it would be to attempt to stem the tide of favour which at present supported him, I received him with much politeness."

After a few compliments had been bandied

about, Cagliostro inquired whether it was true, as he had been informed, that the Countess was anxious to look into futurity, and, if so, he was ready to accede to her demand. The lady having replied in the affirmative—

"Are you quite sure," asked Cagliostro, "that you have courage to look behind the dread curtain which divides the present and past from the future?"

"Indeed," replied the Countess, "I am not famous for courage, and only beg of you not to expose me to any needless alarm."

"Whatever you may see," continued the Count, "you must not hold me responsible. I am utterly ignorant of what this mirror will present to your eyes, nor can I ever know unless you are pleased to tell me."

Whilst saying this he drew from a side pocket, in the breast of his coat, a metallic glass or mirror, in an ebony case ornamented with a variety of magical characters in gold and silver. "If you do indeed desire to read the things futurity has in store for you," he continued, presenting the case to the lady, "open this case, and carefully examine the polished surface of the mirror it contains; it will show you the most important and solemn act of your whole

life; but ere you once allow your eyes to dwell upon it, consider how far you have courage and resolution to bear whatever may strike your gaze; and be assured, that let its surface reflect you either propitious scenes or otherwise, not one circumstance can fail of being duly and fully accomplished."

These words were pronounced in so deep and solemn a tone that the Countess hesitated before receiving the magic mirror from his hands. However, curiosity was too strong for her, and she determined to look into it.

"The Count perceiving my determination," she says, "began pronouncing some barbarous words utterly foreign to my ears; he then begged the Cardinal to repeat the Apostle's Creed, which the Prince (not without much hesitation) did. Cagliostro then suddenly opened the box and taking out the mirror, laid it before me; I cast my eyes eagerly upon it, but the sight was too horrible for mortal vision. I uttered a loud scream, and fell fainting into the arms of Prince Louis" (Cardinal de Rohan).

When the Countess recovered her senses, she found herself extended on a couch surrounded by her attendants all in great alarm at her sudden illness, and using every means to restore her to

life. The Cardinal saw her soon afterwards and assured her of the extreme sorrow felt by Cagliostro, who, he said, was in utter ignorance of what had been seen upon the mirror. However, she forbid the servants to allow the "Count" to enter the house again; and it was more than a fortnight before Madame du Barri regained her accustomed health. She never could bring herself to reveal the appalling vision; but after some years had elapsed, she began to consider it as merely an optical delusion played off by the man Cagliostro in revenge for some unintentional offence she might have given him. At this long interval of time, however, she wrote to a friend the following words: "There are times when the frightful recollection rises before me, and fills me with the most thrilling dread."

A considerable time after this occurrence, Madame du Barri had an interview with the Duchess de Grammont, who appears to have been duped by an enthusiast of the name of Cazotte; and the conversation which ensued on that occasion has been recorded in the Memoirs of the Countess. After alluding to past times and the actual state of France, Madame du Barri remarked:—"Yes, we have

both lost dear and powerful friends; whither will our adverse fate next lead us?"

"To the scaffold, if there be any truth in the prophecy of Cazotte!" exclaimed Madame de Grammont.

"What do I hear?" cried the Countess with horror, "has such a destiny been foretold to you also?"

"How! *also?* has it been revealed to you as well as myself?"

Remembering the mirror of Cagliostro, the Countess shuddered and said: "How wicked are those impostors who thus play upon our credulity!"

"I must not hear you class Cazotte among such mere pretenders to the art," returned the Duchess; and she then related that one evening when M. de Cazotte was at a large party, he was requested to consult the planets and make known the destiny of the persons present. He evaded the subject as long as he could, but being pressed, "he declared that of the whole company then before him not one would escape a violent and public death, from which not even the King and Queen would be exempt."

On hearing these words a cry of terror escaped from the lips of Madame du Barri, whilst her companion was calm and collected.

"Surely," said the Duchess "you would not object to mount the scaffold in such honourable society?"

This conversation took place in 1787. A few years later, when the poor Countess perished on the scaffold, the scene was one of the most iniquitous and disgraceful of the whole revolution.

X.

THE DIAMOND NECKLACE.

MADAME CAMPAN, one of the most devoted friends of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, tells us in her Memoirs that in the year 1774 the Queen had purchased from the jeweller Bœhmer some diamond ornaments, to the value of £14,400, and that they were paid for out of her private purse; moreover, that she had taken several years to effect this payment.

Since then the King had presented the Queen with a beautiful necklace of rubies and diamonds, and also with a pair of bracelets of the value of some £8000. On this occasion, Marie Antoinette declared that she had jewels enough, and that she would never purchase any more. Nevertheless, Bœhmer, who had been for some time past making a collection of the finest diamonds he could meet with, offered the whole

of them to the Queen in the shape of a superb necklace that he valued at £64,000. Her Majesty at once refused the offer, and the King is said to have stated, referring to the hostilities with England, "We require a man-of-war rather than a piece of jewellery."

In spite of all this, Bœhmer persisted in endeavouring to dispose of the necklace to the Queen, and he pushed matters so far that he actually obtained an audience of Her Majesty, at which he behaved like a madman, saying that he would be ruined if she did not purchase the diamonds, and that he should commit suicide. This conduct angered the Queen, who ordered him to leave her presence, and for a long time afterwards nothing was heard of him, at least at Court. The matter was in fact quite forgotten, when one morning he was to deliver some piece of jewellery that he had repaired, and presented himself before the Queen as she was returning from mass. He appeared in the best of humours and took the opportunity of presenting a letter, a short petition, at the same time. In the writing, he expressed himself "happy to see Her Majesty in possession of the finest diamonds in the world, and begged her not to forget him."

The Queen imagined he must be mad, and put the letter in the fire, saying "that is not worth keeping."

This was some time in 1785; on the 1st of August of that year Madame Campan quitted Versailles to go to her own house, and on the 3rd the jeweller Bœhmer called upon her, complaining that he had received no answer to the letter he had delivered to the Queen.

Madame Campan replied that there was no answer to give, and that Her Majesty had burnt the letter.

"But the Queen knows that she owes me money!" exclaimed the jeweller.

"Money, Monsieur Bœhmer! it is long since we have settled all your accounts against the Queen."

"Madame, you cannot be in the secret, a man is not paid but ruined when he is refused more than £60,000 that is owing to him!"

"Have you lost your wits, sir? How on earth could the Queen possibly owe you such a sum of money?"

"For my diamond necklace, Madame," replied the jeweller coldly.

"What! that same necklace which you tormented Her Majesty about some years ago? I

thought you said you had sold it at Constantinople."

"It was the Queen who ordered me to reply so to any who made inquiries about it."

He then related to Madame Campan that the necklace had been purchased for the Queen by the Cardinal de Rohan.

"You are deceived!" cried Madame Campan, "the Queen has not spoken to the Cardinal since her return from Vienna, there is not a man in less favour in the whole court."

"You are deceived yourself, Madame," retorted the jeweller, "she sees his Eminence privately, and she has given him £12,000 on account, which she took in his presence from the little sécretaire in porcelain that stands near the chimney-piece of her boudoir."

"The Cardinal told you that?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Oh! what an odious piece of intrigue!"

"Truly, Madame, I begin to be frightened—for the Cardinal told me she would wear the necklace on Whitsunday, and she did not do so; that is what caused me to write to Her Majesty."

Soon after this the jeweller left; Madame Campan recommended him to see M. de Breteuil, court minister; but it appears that he only saw

the Cardinal, and kept begging an audience of the Queen. Marie Antoinette refused to see him, believing that he must be mad.

Some days later, Madame Campan saw the Queen at Trianon, and the above conversation was related, much to Her Majesty's astonishment. It will be observed that during the whole of it not a word had been said about the woman De la Motte, who afterwards figured so conspicuously in this affair.

On the 15th of August following, an extraordinary scene occurred at Versailles. The Cardinal de Rohan, who was waiting in the King's chamber the moment for attending mass, at which it is believed he was to officiate, was at twelve o'clock, suddenly summoned to the King's private cabinet, the Queen was also present. The following conversation ensued; Louis XVI. being the first to speak :—

"You have bought some diamonds from Bœhmer?"

"Yes, Sire."

"What have you done with them?"

"I believe they were handed to the Queen."

"Who authorised you to undertake this business?"

"A lady, Madame la Comtesse de la Motte

Valois, who had presented to me a letter from the Queen, and I thought I should enter into Her Majesty's good graces by executing the commission."

At this juncture the Queen interrupted him, and exclaimed :—

"How, sir, could you believe—you to whom I have not spoken a word for eight years—how could you imagine that I should have chosen you to undertake such a negotiation with such a woman?"

"I see," returned the Cardinal, "that I have been cruelly deceived. I will pay for the necklace; it was the desire to please Your Majesty, that blinded my eyes—I saw no trickery—I am very sorry for what has occurred."

He then took out of his pocket the letter supposed to have been written by the Queen to the said Madame de la Motte. The King took it, and showing it to the Cardinal, said:

"That is neither the writing of the Queen nor her signature; how could a Prince of the house of Rohan and a Great Almoner be so ignorant as to believe that the Queen would sign herself 'Marie Antoinette de France?' Everyone knows that Queens only sign the Christian name—But," continued His Majesty, presenting to the Cardinal

a copy of his letter to the jeweller—"do you remember writing a letter of which this is a copy?"

The Cardinal after glancing over it said, he did *not* remember it.

"But how if we could show you the original with your signature attached?"

"If the letter is signed by me, Sire, it must be exact."

"Then, explain the whole of this enigma to us," continued the King, "I do not wish to find you culpable, I desire that you should justify yourself. Explain to me all these communications with Bœhmer—these assurances and these letters?"

The Cardinal, according to Madame Campan, turned deadly pale at these words, and declared that he was too much unnerved to reply categorically. At which the King said, "Compose yourself, Monsieur le Cardinal, pass into my cabinet where you will find ink and paper, write down what you would wish to say to me."

He did so, and returned in about a quarter of an hour; but the statement in writing was as vague as his conversation; on which the King said "Retire, sir!" The Cardinal was at once arrested.

An adventuress, who styled herself the Countess

de la Motte, had plotted the whole affair. She had deceived the Cardinal and the jeweller, had forged the Queen's signature, and had actually pretended to concoct a meeting between the Queen and the Cardinal at Versailles at twelve o'clock at night, when a young woman named Oliva, who resembled Marie Antoinette in face and figure, and who held some minor post at court, personified the Queen for an instant and then disappeared among the shrubbery.

The Queen had never even seen the woman De la Motte.

The celebrated trial upon this robbery began in December, 1785, and only ended in May, 1786. The persons cited to appear were the young person named Oliva, the "Count" Cagliostro, M. de Vilette, the woman De la Motte (the wife of a guardsman) and the Cardinal de Rohan, whose trial was reserved for the last. Mademoiselle Oliva confessed that she personified the Queen in the scene at night in the shrubbery, but that she did so at the instance of Madame de la Motte, who assured her it was only to amuse the Queen that this little piece of acting was imagined. Cagliostro, who was, probably at the bottom of the whole concern, declared that he was perfectly ignorant of the entire occurrence.

Vilette admitted that the signature "*Marie Antoinette de France*" was in his handwriting. The woman De la Motte appeared before her judges with a degree of impudence that was quite revolting, and denied everything, even things that were proved beyond a doubt. The Cardinal pretended that he had been duped; by dint of bribery and enormous pressure he managed to get a favourable verdict, though it seemed at first decided that he had disgraced himself.

The upshot of the whole trial was condensed in the following decision of the Court.

Four points were considered proved, namely:—

1. That the Cardinal was persuaded he purchased the necklace for the Queen.

2. That the authorisation signed "*Marie Antoinette de France*" was written by Vilette at the instigation of the woman De la Motte.

3. That the necklace had been delivered to Madame de la Motte in the belief that she would deliver it to the Queen.

4. That her husband had carried it off to London, broken it up, and sold the most valuable of the stones.

Madame de la Motte was condemned to have her two shoulders branded with the letter V (*voleuse*), to have her head shaved by the

executioner, and to be confined for life in the prison of La Salpêtrière at Paris. Vilette was banished for life; Cagliostro sent out of the kingdom; and Mademoiselle Oliva expelled from the Court. The Cardinal was discharged; a decision which displeased the King and Queen exceedingly.

The woman De la Motte was afterwards removed to the hospital of Guingamp, whence she contrived to escape and got over to London.

On the 7th April, 1791, the adventurer Cagliostro was condemned by the Inquisition at Rome as a freemason!

XI.

A MUSICAL SCENE ON THE BOULEVARDS.

AT this period the warfare between the Glückists and Piccinists was at its height—Glück, the favourite composer and instructor of Marie Antoinette, adored by the Court,— Piccini, the composer of the people, the representative of the melodious Italian school. The eccentric Grétry was putting forth some of his most successful compositions. Sacchini, also in Paris, was composing operas and giving instructions to the promising Mrs. Billington, during her visit there. Mademoiselle Clairon, who tells us that she was baptised by a priest dressed as harlequin, and his clerk as a clown, was still the great tragic actress, and Madame de St. Huberty, the elegant representative of French opera, had risen high in the estimation of Glück.

The superb *danseuses* Carmargo and Guimard

had long delighted the Parisian public; the former born in Brussels, of Spanish parents, and whose family had given cardinals to Rome, had already retired; the latter, the heroine of the Opera, for so many years, was about to do so. Sophie Arnould was also past the meridian of her talent, though still clever and witty as ever. After living for eight years as the wife of the Count de Lauraguais, she had thought proper one morning to order her magnificent carriage to be driven round to the door, had placed in it all the jewels and costly ornaments that the Count had, at various times, presented to her, together with her two infants, and dispatched them all to the real Countess—who, it is asserted, kept the children, but returned the jewels—and had retired, more or less, from public life as the great storm was brewing.

It was some years before this, on a fine July evening of the year 1778, that the good folks strolling along the Boulevards, or seated before the little tables of a *café* at the corner of the Rue de la Michaudière, which forms an angle with the Boulevard, were struck by the magnificent voice of an itinerant musician, a handsome Italian girl, who accompanied herself upon the guitar. The effect she produced upon her mis-

cellaneous audience was most remarkable. Promenaders stood in compact masses to listen; the carriages of the aristocracy drew up for the same purpose, and children climbed the trunks of the trees to see what was going on.

A tall, dark, elegant girl, apparently not twenty years of age, was the cause of all this wonder. She had an old guitar swung from her shoulders, and she sang to its soft accompaniment, and in exquisite style, the most brilliant *cavatinas* of the operatic *répertoire.*

Her performance brought down thunders of applause, at which she smiled gracefully in acknowledgment, as she held out her hand to receive the proferred coin. Her receipts for that evening alone might have been envied by more than one of the minor theatres. The girl's face was bronzed and handsome, her hair dark as coal, like her large expressive eyes; her hands soft, white and delicate, like those of a lady of high birth. But the great wonder of all was her voice. It was of enormous compass, sonorous, flexible and of exquisite sweetness. *Bravoura* airs, love songs, comic songs and *fioritura* of all descriptions flowed forth successively to the inexpressible delight of the listeners. Never had such a treat been given to the loungers on

the Boulevards; and many well known connoisseurs did not hesitate to assert that they had never heard such splendid singing in their lives.

The young *cantatrice* had finished her labours in that district and was about to retire from the scene of these ovations, the carriages were moving on and the strollers resuming their promenade, when a gentleman of some five and forty years of age, who, with his arms fixed immoveably upon one of the tables of the *café* and his eyes rivetted upon the singer, had listened with astonishment and delight to her *cadenzas* and *fioritura*, beckoned her to approach, slipped a piece of gold into her hand and said,

"What is your name?"

"Brigitti," replied the girl.

"How old are you?"

"Nineteen, Monsieur."

"Who taught you music?"

"My father."

"How long did you learn?"

"Two months."

"But two months could not have enabled you to learn all those songs."

"No, but I can sing what I hear sung. I repeat the airs I hear until I know them myself."

After some further conversation of the same kind the gentleman said,

"But would you not like to become a singer at the Opera? You seem very fond of music, you feel what you sing—would it not be better to study for the operatic stage than to sing about in the streets?"

At these words the girl's eyes filled with tears, and as they trickled down her finely sculptured features, she replied in bitter tones,

"Is it possible, Monsieur, that a poor girl like me, without education, without a friend in the world, can hope for such things as you speak of? No, Monsieur, my destiny, alas! is to live and die a poor street-singer."

Monsieur Desvimes, for that was the gentleman's name, was grieved at having wounded her pride; for she was evidently ambitious by nature. He seized her hand, as he said,

"Listen, my young friend, I had no intention of hurting your feelings; on the contrary, I am so pleased with what I have heard of your singing this evening, that I am willing to see whether something cannot be done for you." Then taking a card from his pocket-book, he added, "This is my address. If you call at my house to-morrow at midday, you shall meet

some gentlemen who may feel disposed to take an interest in your affairs, and enable you to embrace a better career."

The girl nodded assent, and withdrew. Her heart was too full to speak.

Monsieur Desvimes was for some time manager of the French Opera, and a man who, though he had retired from the active duties of management, still exercised very considerable influence in the Parisian world of art. He was a person of tact and experience, with a kind heart and much good taste. One of his hobbies was that of making new discoveries, and finding out good singers for the lyric drama. In this Italian girl he imagined he had found a real treasure, and awaited her arrival with no small degree of impatience.

She knocked at the door of M. Desvimes' apartments at the appointed hour. Several musicians of eminence were already there. The conversation of the preceding evening was repeated, and the young singer added to what we have already given, that her name was Brigitti Banti, that she was born in the little Italian village of Monticelli d'Ongina, where her father was formerly a minstrel, a violin player, and had no little difficulty to support his

family by the exercise of his profession. A premature death had carried him off, leaving the widow totally unprovided for. Brigitti, who possessed a fine voice had wandered from village to village, from town to town, singing for her daily bread.

To the connoisseurs at M. Desvimes' house the girl sang some of the best songs of her *répertoire*. One of them played to her a *cavatina* by Sacchini which she sang perfectly after hearing it played twice. An air of Glück's composition was then tried, in which she was no less successful.

It was at once decided that her education should be provided for, the services of proper instructors engaged, and that Brigitti Banti should be, with as little delay as possible, transformed into an educated *prima donna*. In a few months she gave her masters the most astonishing promise, and shortly, indeed, she did become, as our readers are doubtless aware, one of the finest singers in Europe.

After meeting with unexampled success at the opera houses of Germany, Austria, and Italy, she came to London, where she remained a favourite *prima donna* for ten years (1792—1802) giving constant delight to her audiences.

A touching scene is related of a visit to her

native village in the course of her travels through Italy. She had not been near it for many years. When she left she was a poor forlorn girl in rags, she was now already rich, celebrated, universally admired. Her heart beat loudly as she approached the well known, still loved, slopes of her former home, for her desire to see it once again was inextinguishable.

It was in vain, however, that she sought for the familiar form of her poor father's cottage, with its little grassy bank and the large trees. Alas! they had all disappeared to enlarge the entrance to some lordly park in the neighbourhood. Neither did she recognise a single face she met in the little streets of the village.

The celebrated *cantatrice* was withdrawing from this desolate scene, her heart saddened, and with moistened eyelids, when she perceived, at a little distance, a beggar in rags whose countenance was wrinkled with care and suffering, though he was still young. As he approached and begged for alms, there was something in his gait and voice that La Banti was struck with.

"Where do you come from?" she inquired.

"From Monticelli."

"Do you live with your parents?"

"I have no parents."

"How long is it since your father died?"

"About eight or nine years."

"Have you no sister younger than yourself?

"I had one, but I don't know what has become of her."

"Is not your name Antonio Banti?"

At these words the beggar raised his eyes in astonishment.

"How do you know that?" he exclaimed.

Brigitti could not reply, she threw herself into the arms of her brother, and bathed his face with her tears of joy.

XII.

MARIE ANTOINETTE AS AN ACTRESS.

IT has been said, though upon very slender authority, that Queen Marie Antoinette had the greatest faith in the good taste and artistic perfection of Mademoiselle Guimard, the great Terpsichore of the period. Houssaye assures us that the Queen admitted the celebrated *danseuse* to her "toilette Councils," and took her advice in the presence of the Princess de Chimay, the Countess d'Ossan and the Marchioness of Roche-Aymon.

That the residence of La Guimard at Pantin, as well as her luxurious palace in the Chausée d'Antin, quite eclipsed the Petit Trianon in the matter of theatrical performances and brilliant suppers, no one can doubt, but that she was ever admitted into the Queen's confidence in matters

of toilette, is perhaps only another of those scandalous reports that were so eagerly welcomed at Paris, and mostly emanated from the personages attached to the Court, whom outsiders felt bound to believe. Houssaye is evidently the victim of such untruthful reports when he asserts that one day Mademoiselle Guimard being ordered to prison for contempt of the magistrates said to her maid: "Don't cry, Gothon, I have written to the Queen that I have discovered a new and effective method of dressing the hair, and I shall be at liberty this very evening."

At the time when private theatricals formed a notable portion of the amusements at Trianon, about the year 1780, Mademoiselle Guimard was already passing into retirement.

"Private" theatricals was indeed the proper term; for these amateur performances were, at first, kept very select; public curiosity was by no means satisfied, though constantly excited; and people were particularly anxious to learn anything they could of the Queen's recent taste for this kind of amusement. Those who enjoyed the privilege of being present at the Petit Trianon when such a performance was given, reported that the Queen always selected the parts of waiting-maids, soubrettes, &c., which some went so

far as to consider a breach of etiquette, and expressed no little surprise that Her Majesty, not satisfied with becoming an actress, should choose to appear wearing the dress of servitude belonging to the characters she was pleased to assume. At the present day such scruples appear ludicrous. Art in any form; whether that of the actress, the painter, or the musician, may certainly be cultivated by a queen or a peasant, without violating any rules of "etiquette." Mesdames Jules and Diane de Polignac were also enlisted in the *corps dramatique*, whilst the actors were the Comte d'Artois, M. de Dillon, Reyneval, de Coigny, de Vaucheuil, d'Adhemer and several others. Two well known comedians, Dagincourt and Dugazon, were chosen to instruct these illustrious amateurs in their new vocation.

As for the audience, it consisted principally of different members of the Royal Family. Few other persons were admitted, except those of the Queen's household who were placed in the back seats, quite at the extremity of the apartment in which the stage and its appurtenances were erected.

In spite of scandal and backbiting it was a gay, happy time compared to what was destined to

follow some short ten or twelve years later! Many and interesting were the little episodes that managed to ooze out of the Courtly Theatre and found their way to the general public. At one of the representations, just at the moment when the Queen had concluded a little song, a loud hiss was heard through the theatre. Her Majesty, fully sensible of there being but one person in the company who would dare to presume risking such a mark of disapprobation, advanced to the front of the stage and, addressing the King, said with a low courtesy:

"Sir, if my performance does not meet with your approbation, have the kindness to retire, you will have your money returned to you at the door."

The clever and playful retort was loudly applauded, and the King, while asking pardon for his offence, protested that he had committed it merely for the sake of mischief, and by no means from ill-nature. Alas! how few people know where a joke ends, and an insult begins! The injury that the most simple joke may possibly occasion is quite sufficient, without the necessity of adding insult to it. The King had not the slightest idea of proferring an insult to his

charming and accomplished consort; however, uncharitable people at once admitted that Marie Antoinette's acting was below mediocrity, and might well justify the disproval of His Majesty. Others were of a different opinion.

In process of time, when the royal amateurs had made as they imagined considerable progress in the dramatic art, they invited the presence of a larger audience. A select number of distinguished persons were admitted to the representations, and this created no little envy and jealousy among those who were excluded. The latter never dreamt that the limited dimensions of the theatre at Trianon could not accommodate everyone, and that most probably all would receive invitations in their turn. It was nevertheless an awkward business, and no doubt contributed to increase the number of the Queen's enemies.

It was on this occasion, that one of these "serpents in the grass" actually made the ill-natured and prophetic remark: "It appears that Her Majesty seems very fond of playing comedy; perhaps, ere long, she will favour us with a tragedy."

It was not long before the disapprobation ex-

pressed about these private theatricals—prompted as we have just said, by envy—reached the Queen's ears, and in order to neutralise the effects of it, she thought of inducing some other member of the Royal Family to join the company. Her choice naturally fell upon Madame, wife of Monsieur, Comte de Provence (afterwards Louis XVIII), although a certain coolness had lately existed between these two princesses. In spite of this, the Queen solicited her sister-in-law earnestly to take part in the performances, and to study a *rôle* for the next play that would be given. It appears that Madame was by no means adverse to this proposal, but her husband positively refused to permit it in spite of all kinds of entreaties.

Marie Antoinette was exceedingly displeased at this severity, and remonstrated strongly upon it; but the Comte de Provence merely replied that "his rank and position did not permit his wife to become an actress."

"When I do not consider it derogatory to my dignity," replied the Queen, throwing back her head with that proud gesture which was at times peculiar to her, "methinks Madame might safely follow my example."

"Pardon me," added her brother-in-law,

"Your Majesty is Queen and may do anything."

"I understand," rejoined Marie Antoinette, "Madame is merely Queen in expectation, and you would fain see her ascend the throne surrounded by the high homage and respect of the whole nation."

"I did not say so," answered the Comte de Provence with imperturbable coolness, and preparing to leave the room.

"But you thought so, my good brother, which is not much better," said the Queen; on which Monsieur, with a low bow, quitted the apartment.

There are several different versions of this little family scene, but in the main they agree tolerably with what we have just related. One account says that the Comte d'Artois was present, and listened in silence to the above dialogue. When his brother had retired he exclaimed, with a laugh:

"Really, Your Majesty must pardon me if, believing you were angry, I did not venture to interfere in the discussion, but now that I perceive you are but jesting, I would fain share your mirth."

XIII.

MADEMOISELLE CLAIRON AND HER LOVERS.

LET us now glance at the life of a professional artiste; let us leave the Queen Marie Antoinette and her royal amateurs, and depict briefly the career of the most celebrated actress of that day, the clever, *piquante* and pretty Hippolyte Clairon. Her influence on the period extends some time back into the latter days of Louis XV., when her success was at its greatest height, but spreads, nevertheless, far into the days of the great Revolution, by which she suffered like so many others.

The lives of the actresses of the eighteenth century are more curious and more romantic than anything to be found in fiction. In those days they knew how to enjoy life; they were the grasshoppers who sang and danced through-

out the bright summer, forgetting that the cold winds of winter were in store for them. They never, like the ant, thought of November whilst they enjoyed the golden days of May. After all, is La Fontaine's doctrine right? There are people who think it was the grasshopper, and not the ant, that had the best of it. However, it cannot be very pleasant to be a queen in summer and a beggar in winter.

Mademoiselle Clairon was born near the Belgian frontiers at Condé, in Hainault, in 1723; it was carnival time, and her mother brought her into the world, a seven months' child, between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. It was the custom of the little town to dance and be merry at this time of the year, and the parish priest was as fond of a masquerade as the rest of them. The child was so delicate that mother and grandmother believed it could not survive more than a few moments, and as both were piously inclined, they decided on carrying the infant at once to the church to have it baptised. Not a soul was there, but a kind neighbour informed them that the ecclesiastics were at an afternoon dance, in fancy dress, at a gentleman's house close by. Without a moment's delay the child was carried there. M. le Curé

appeared dressed as a harlequin, and his incumbent as a clown; they thought the case urgent, stopped the violins, took what was necessary from the side-board, and having pronounced the sacred words, sent the infant home baptised by the name of Hippolyte Leyris de la Tude Claire. The world knows her better, however, as Hippolyte Clairon.

Her mother was not only poor, but cruel and superstitious. She was a furious Romanist, and she beat her daughter to make her fear God. When eleven years of age, the little Hippolyte was never allowed to play in the sunshine with other children, but was frequently shut up *to sew* in a miserable little room without any furniture, and the only books she ever saw were a church catechism, and a prayer book. At Paris her little prison looked on to a large house, in which she once saw a window wide open opposite to her own. A marvellous spectacle then displayed itself—nothing less than the already distinguished, and afterwards celebrated, Mademoiselle Dangeville taking a dancing lesson. To the little Hippolyte it seemed like a dream. Day after day, at the same hour, she sprang to her tiny window, and not only enjoyed the wonderful sight, but actually learnt the steps

and postures of the rising actress so accurately, that one afternoon she astonished her mother and some relatives by a performance of the same kind. One of the latter insisted on taking her to the theatre. "To the theatre," cried the mother, "you might just as well take her to perdition." "Tranquillize yourself, madame," rejoined the other, "you have already sent your daughter to the theatre by shutting her up in the adjoining room." It ended not only in going to the theatre to witness a performance, but in the engagement, some few months later, of the precocious child at the Théâtre Italien, where she took certain children's *rôles*. There, however, it was impossible to stay, one of the actors having some children of his own to push on, with whose success Hippolyte would have seriously interfered.

So she was drafted into La Noue's *troupe* at Rouen, when she was little more than thirteen, and sang, danced or played any parts which happened to suit her in the répertoire, remaining at the theatre for several years. From the first the clever girl was received into society, and her constantly increasing success surrounded her with admirers of every description. At the house of Madame de Bimorel, more especially,

was gallantry carried to its greatest height. But the heart of Hippolyte Clairon was impregnable; she listened patiently to the discourses of her admirers, but contented herself with "dying for love" on the stage only.

The day came, however, when her affections were really captivated, and the fortunate person was a M. du Rouvray, a constant visitor at the house of Madame de Bimorel. Du Rouvray was a nobleman, or nearly so; and his face, his manners and his intelligence, would easily have enabled him to dispense with an authentic coat-of-arms. Madame de Bimorel had a little pleasure boat on the Seine, which enabled her to take her friends to a small island on the river opposite one of her fields, where pleasant luncheon parties were organised during the fine weather. It was one bright summer's day on this little island that the boat drifted away as Du Rouvray sprang from it after his lady-love. They followed it anxiously with their eyes till it lodged nearly out of sight in some reeds at the opposite side of the river, and, whilst vowing eternal affection to each other, wondered how on earth they could possibly get back in time for dinner—or indeed, at all. Fortunately the voice of Rhodilles, an actor at the Rouen

theatre was heard singing along the opposite path. They shouted to him and explained their perilous situation. Rhodilles went for the boat, rowed as quickly as he could against the stream to the island, and holding out his hand to the enchanting actress, said, "Pass in, beautiful Hippolyta."

Mademoiselle Clairon did not wait to be asked twice, she sprang into the boat, and at the same moment Rhodilles, coolly saluting M. du Rouvray, pushed off the skiff from the side before the latter could jump in; and in spite of the entreaties of the fair *comédienne*, he rowed her away whilst the young lover stood aghast, taking a lesson of philosophy. Such extraordinary conduct can only be explained by admitting, as some have done, that Rhodilles was her lover before Du Rouvray.

But still another adorer was languishing beneath the Rouen sky for one encouraging glance of those bright eyes, which had already become so notorious. This was Gaillard, the poet, who wrote songs for her, and then libelled her. His addresses being rejected rather abruptly, he wrote that infamous little book, devoid of wit or gaiety, without style, and full of falsehoods, entitled "Histoire de Made-

moiselle Frétillon." It was an odious libel, and a terrible weapon in the hands of those who were jealous of her rising fame as a tragic actress.

Mademoiselle Clairon proceeded to Lille, and La Noue having left the company to make his *débût* at Paris, she joined another *troupe* that was playing at Ghent, in honour of the King of England and the allies. She turned all heads, and, we are told, was proposed to by the Commander-in-Chief of the English Army, whom she politely refused, saying that she belonged to her own country and to the theatre. He would not consent to her departure, however, hoping that in the course of a short time she would change her mind. In the meantime, the lady, in order to escape, caused herself to be carried off by one of the General's aides-de-camp.

She alighted from her post-chaise at Dunkirk, where she had not been long, before she received an order from headquarters to make her *débût* at the Paris Opera. There she made her first appearance as Venus in the opera of "Hésione," and, though an indifferent musician, was much applauded on account of her beauty. However, she left immediately for the Comédie Française.

On signing her engagement, she astonished those who did not know her by declaring that she would only play great tragic *rôles;* it being imagined that light comedy was more suited to her, until she achieved success in Racine's "Phèdre." In fact, whilst all the Parisian connoisseurs were prepared to laugh at her, she had no sooner appeared than her exquisite rendering of the part roused the whole house into a frenzy of enthusiasm.

At this time the company at the Comédie Française was very badly paid; all the artistes were poor, and often sold their dresses and jewellery, when they had any, to satisfy their love of pleasure. One day the Cardinal de Richelieu called upon Mademoiselle Clairon to engage her for one of his *fêtes.* She refused. "Why?" inquired the Cardinal. "I have no dress;" said the actress. Richelieu burst into a coarse laugh. "No!" she continued, "not one dress, our receipts at the theatre are so small, that I have been obliged to sell everything of any value that I possessed."

All this time she lived in the Rue des Marais. She had rented for £48 the little house in which Racine lived with his family for forty years, where he composed all his immortal works

and where he died. The celebrated Adrienne Lecouvreur had afterwards lived and died there also. It was a most appropriate abode for an actress such as Mademoiselle Clairon. Her talent and success reached their zenith about 1762, and for many years afterwards her influence upon dramatic art in France must have been very considerable. Marmontel, the poet, wrote verses for her and adored her.

One evening as they were supping together after the theatre, he appeared sad.

"What is the matter with you?" inquired Hippolyte. "You look melancholy. I hope you are not insulting me by composing a tragedy whilst we are at supper!"

Alas! the young poet was not long allowed the possession of that fickle heart. The Bailiff de Fleury supplanted him, and when he said that Hippolyte had broken his heart, she replied, "Never mind—you shall be my poet lover, and he my lover in prose." Marmontel assured her in vain that he could write prose as well as verse, and, in fact, he did write those bitter "Mémoires d'un Père pour servir à l'instruction de ses Enfants."

Poor Marmontel! The day after the performance of "Zémire et Azor" at the Opéra, Mar-

montel, and Grétry the composer of the music, were presented to Marie Antoinette in the gallery at Fontainebleau as she was going to Mass. She complimented the composer in a marked manner, but did not address a single word to the poet. "Oh! my friend," said Grétry, as the Queen retired, "this will incite me to write some excellent music . . . ."—"And me, some detestable words," put in the other.

The next on the list of the adorers of Mademoiselle Clairon was an old fop, the Marquis de Ximenes, who doted upon all the celebrated actresses of his time. The affection on the lady's part does not appear to have been very deep seated, and as for the Marquis he was very touchy. A single word caused a quarrel, and it was not long before he returned a beautiful crayon drawing, her portrait, to the person who had sat for it. "This pastel drawing," he said, "is like human beauty, it fades in the sun—it is some years since the sun rose for the first time on you." But Mademoiselle Clairon could afford to laugh at such insults. Her reputation extended far out of France; our own Garrick admired her, and is said to have composed four verses in her honour; and as for her fortune, it must have increased with her success, for, we are told, that between

the acts of a special performance given to the public, she threw handfuls of silver coin into the pit; at which the people cried "Vive le Roi! vive Mademoiselle Clairon!" not knowing to which they owed the miraculous coin. The King indeed had ordered the performance, but the silver money was a spontaneous gift from the celebrated actress.

She was not the least surprised at her enormous success, nor by any means astonished to find herself in the higher circles of Parisian society. Rich and noble ladies dined or supped at her table, Mesdames de Chabrillant, d'Aiguillon, de Villeroy, de la Vallière, de Forcalquier, and she often visited Madame du Deffand, and Madame Geoffrin.* The Russian Princess Galitzin, in admiration of Mademoiselle Clairon's talent, made her sit for her portrait to Vanloo, and presented her with it. The King Louis XV. saw the portrait,

* When Madame du Deffand died, the following conversation occurred between two of her friends:—

"So your old friend Madame du Deffand is dead," said Madame du B.

"Ah! yes, I am sorry to say she is. Indeed I am much inconvenienced by the circumstance," rejoined the Maréchale de M., "as I was accustomed to spend one evening a week at her house, and I have now my Wednesdays completely thrown on my hands."

in the artist's studio, and admired it so much that he ordered it to be expensively framed and engraved. The frame cost no less than £200; and the engraving about twice that amount.

Among the numerous enemies that genius and success manufactured for her, were the two writers, La Harpe and Fréron. La Harpe disliked her because she preferred Racine's plays, and would not perform in any of his. Fréron hated her, because she preferred Voltaire to him. This was a matter of taste, and most persons will side with the talented actress. Things came to such a pass, however, that in 1775 Fréron forgot himself so far as to libel the fair *comédienne* in a paper which he edited. Upon which she declared, that unless he was punished she would withdraw from the theatre in spite of the authorities. By some intrigue or other the shameless journalist escaped the punishment he deserved, and poor Mademoiselle Clairon was, on the contrary, ordered to prison, for contempt of court, in refusing the orders of the authorities to continue her performances.

This was a pretty state of things! Still not so bad as they appeared. On arriving at the prison Fort-l'Evêque, she was shown, not into a common cell, but into an elegant apartment

which her friends, Madame de Villeroy, Madame de Sauvigny and the Duchesse de Duras had furnished with great elegance, not to say magnificence. Here she spent a few days, receiving numerous visitors, and entertaining company at dinner; at the end of which short interval she obtained from the prison physician, a medical certificate, stating that her health was in danger, and was forthwith set at liberty.

Nevertheless, after such an indignity, nothing short of a general invitation from the public could induce her to return to the theatre, but the ungrateful public had already begun to idolize two other queens of comedy, Mademoiselle Dubois and Mademoiselle Raucourt, besides Sophie Arnould, and several others somewhat less notable at this time. Seeing that no such invitation was forthcoming, she ordered her carriage, gave out that she was going to consult her doctor, but in reality drove to her old friend Voltaire for advice and consolation.

After absenting herself as long as possible from the capital, she returned to Paris in the winter—alas! she found winter everywhere; in her deserted house, in her unfaithful friends, and in the hearts of her former admirers. It was of no use attempt-

ing to be gay; it was useless to listen to the flattering speeches of M. de Valbelles, or to decorate her carriage with artificial precious stones to rival that of Mademoiselle Guimard. She felt that youth and glory belonged to her much less than formerly, her brilliant star was fast approaching the dread horizon. Still she acted, occasionally, at the residence of Madame du Deffand, and sometimes on the Terpsichorean stage of Mademoiselle Guimard. But this was not the public she was accustomed to; great lords, artistes, poets and musicians applauded her, but their applause no longer caused her heart to beat.

Then came a passion for natural history, she studied the works of Buffon, botanised in the country the whole day long, became absorbed in Nature's mysteries. Flowers had the greatest attraction for her. Was it not in a field of flowers that, with her dear Du Rouvray, she had passed the happiest moments of her existence? But she was not entirely forsaken; Marmontel was often at her side, and De Valbelles worshipped her. The great actor La Rive, formerly her pupil, who became celebrated through her efforts, and who really admired her, wantonly abandoned his guiding star, and appears to have died of grief

because he could not get himself elected mayor of the small village to which he had retired. De Valbelles married a lady of title. This was too much. The great actress sold her furniture, her pictures, her herbarium, and her diamonds, and determined to retire to a convent. She actually thought of selling her own fine portrait by Vanloo. An old admirer offered her £1,000 for it. She magnanimously refused the money, and presented him with the portrait. It was the Margraf of Anspach. He took it to Germany, and hung it in his sitting room. The fair prototype soon followed it, accepting the heart and the palace offered to her. Here she resided for seventeen years.

In the Memoirs which Mademoiselle Clairon published before her death, she says: "The happiness and glory of the Margraf were my sole thoughts, the object of my sole ambition. I did all the good that I could possibly do, and never bestowed a thought upon vengeance or cowardice."

Whilst Marie Antoinette performed her private theatricals, whilst the horrors of the Great Revolution approached, Mademoiselle Clairon governed the estates of the Margraf as Madame de Pompadour had formerly governed

France. A quarrel arose one day, and an eternal adieu was pronounced. Hippolyte Clairon returned to Paris to seek another sovereign. It was in 1790; there was no king. Broken hearted, and in the utmost despair she sought to enter a convent and to devote the rest of her days to God; there was no longer any God. As a last resource she would realize her money left at Paris on mortgage: there was no money, no mortgage! The illustrious actress who had ridden in her carriage and four, who had had the whole of Paris at her feet, was plunged into the utmost depths of misery and despair.

At this time Mademoiselle Clairon was sixty-five years of age. Those elegant fingers that never touched a needle, now learnt to mend the rents in her well-worn dresses; those fair hands made the couch on which each night reposed her weary and broken figure, and learnt to handle the broom that swept the dust from her solitary and dingy little parlour.

She bore her misery with pride and fortitude. When a friend happened to call, she never said, "I am poor," but "I am philosopher, now."

One morning as she was sweeping out the little room, a stranger knocked at the door. "Is Mademoiselle Clairon in?" he inquired. "She is not at home," answered the proud actress. "Oh! perhaps you would be so good," rejoined the other, "as to say that M. du Rouvray has been, and that he will call again this evening." The broom dropped from her hands; "Du Rouvray!" she murmured, as he descended the stairs; "if I only dare tell him . . . . but he will come again." He did not return, and she thanked Heaven for it.

A letter written by her, at this period, to one of her old admirers is still extant, or was so a few years ago. The writing is bold, and the expressions majestic. The seal on the outside bears her name, interwoven with that of the Marquis de Tourves.

Gradually in these last days of dejection, in the midst of the bloody Revolution, Hippolyte Clairon managed to draw a few friends around her. She was invited to live in a respectable citizen's house, and had a few more days of delicious sunshine before she died. She departed this life in the spring of 1802, together with the other celebrated actresses, Sophie Arnould and Mademoiselle Dumesnil.

XIV.

THEATRICAL SCENES.

WE are in possession of a number of scenes which were enacted at the theatres —though not precisely upon the stage—some of which are very characteristic of the times.

Our readers may have heard portions of the music of Paisiello's little opera, "Le Roi Théodore;" probably few, if any, have ever seen that opera performed. For many years it has been a thing of the past, even at Paris, where this composer was so highly esteemed, and where he made a name that will live for a long time to come. It was during the commencement of the troubles which ended in the great outbreak of the Revolution, that "Le Roi Théodore" was performed at the little theatre at Versailles—the theatre of the

town, not that of the palace. One evening, during the said representation, a curious thing occurred. In that part of the opera where King Theodore expresses the dire distress and embarrassment in which he finds himself placed, a powerful voice from the pit exclaimed, "Que n'assemblez-vous les Notables?"—"Why don't you call up the *notables?*"—which direct allusion to the unsatisfactory state of affairs in France brought a roar of laughter that must have caused a sinister echo at head-quarters.

Another "serio-comic" scene occurred one evening as the audience was leaving the Comédie Française in Paris. That young and beautiful woman, Madame de Simiane, whose noble and tender sentiments fanned the fire of Lafayette's ambition, was at the doors of the theatre waiting for her carriage, when, perceiving a porter, she called to him to tell her servants to approach. This being said loud enough to be heard by some people in the street, one of them shouted out, "There are no more servants—all men are brothers." In a moment the witty beauty retorted, "Well then, porter, call my brothers, the servants."

Later on, about 1790, disorders in the theatres were the order of the day, or rather the night,

for scarcely an evening passed without a battle of some kind in the pit, between the so-called "patriots" and the aristocrats. On one occasion, when a performance of "Iphigénie" was given, and it was supposed that the boxes were filled principally by members of the aristocracy, apples were somewhat liberally thrown into them by the lower orders. One of these apples happened to fall into the box occupied by the handsome Duchesse de Biron. Next day she sent it to General Lafayette, with a note to this effect: "Allow me, sir, to present you with the first fruit of the Revolution that has reached me as yet."

Even as far on in the Revolution as 1792, royalist sentiments were occasionally expressed in the pit. On the 22nd of February of that year, the unfortunate Princess Elizabeth wrote to Madame de Raigecourt: "The Queen and her children were at the theatre the night before last. There was a tremendous outburst of applause. The Jacobins tried to make a row, but they were beaten. The duet between the two servants in the piece, where they speak of their love for their master and mistress, was redemanded no less than four times." This was like old times, when Marie Antoinette was Madame la Dauphine, and her appearance was always the signal for enthusi-

astic cheering on the part of the people. However, when once the fatal year, 1789, had dawned, demonstrations of a very opposite nature were the most common. The Queen was one evening applauded, nevertheless, at the opera, when "Armide" was given. The verse which ends, "Chantons, célébrons notre Reine," was taken up, and repeated by the entire house. This little circumstance seems to have given poor Marie Antoinette some rays of hope; before it occurred, she avoided going either to the theatre or the opera, but, encouraged by such a reception, she went soon afterwards to the Italian opera. The actress who happened to be performing at the time, on coming to the words, "Ah, how much I love my mistress!" turned in a very marked manner towards the Royal box. In a moment murmurs were heard to emanate from the pit, and one or more voices ejaculated, "No, no! no more queens, no more mistresses!" Marie Antoinette rose, and left the house. It was the last time she was present at a theatrical representation.

The conduct of some of the nobility at this and former times did not improve the state of affairs; for instance, the scene between the Marquis de Chabrillant and the attorney, M. Pernot. The latter, a man of the highest reputation, had

engaged a front seat in one of the boxes at the Théâtre Français, and the marquis, happening to arrive late, and finding no room in the front, coolly desired M. Pernot to give up his seat. This peremptory and unjust order was, of course, resisted, and M. de Chabrillant carried his folly so far as to go and complain to one of the sentinels that he had been robbed by a person in the box he had just quitted, pointing out the attorney as the guilty person. On this, M. Pernot was immediately seized, and, in spite of his protestations, carried to the guard-house, where, after undergoing the rudest treatment—characteristic of the French police—his accuser sent word that he might be discharged.

A law-suit of a vigorous character was at once commenced, and the affair was noised all over Paris. In vain did the father and friends of M. de Chabrillant offer to the offended lawyer every possible satisfaction; he resolutely refused all compromise, declaring that the honour of French citizens was involved with his own, and that the affair must take its course. It ended in a verdict for M. Pernot, the marquis being compelled to make a formal attestation of his injustice, to pay the costs of the suit, and a certain sum to the poor of the parish of St. Sulpice, whilst bearing

testimony to the unsullied reputation of the plaintiff.

The celebrated actor, Talma, owed his first success to the fact that the public forced the Comédie Française to perform the tragedy of "Charles IX," by Chénier. Hitherto Talma had only played very indifferent parts. In this he was superb, and moreover backed up by the enthusiasm of the people. After "Charles IX.," they played the "Brutus" of Voltaire, in which Talma represented Proculus, really an insignificant part; but he, nevertheless, outshone all the other actors. It was the first time that he appeared dressed rigorously according to the antique, in a toga and with bare legs. Mademoiselle Contat, who played in the same piece, was scandalized at this. But the pit applauded to the skies, not only the actor and the piece, but the innovation in the costume. He was a *sans-culotte!*

XV.

NECKER.

BESIDES the Royal victims, Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, there stand forth in the history of this dreadful period two extremely interesting figures, a hero and a heroine of no common order. One of them was NECKER, and the other CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

In Necker we have the type of a thoroughly good and clever man, whose worthy character is to be admired amidst the dark, wicked, revolutionary rabble, on the one side, and the shameless impostors of the Court on the other. In Charlotte Corday we have that of a beautiful, intelligent, and courageous girl, who, in order to save her country, threw away her valuable life at that brightest of all periods, when youth surrounds it with its happiest dreams. She struck down

with her own hand the vilest, perhaps, of all the revolutionary characters, extirpating with her knife from the side of the Republic a venomous sore, just as a surgeon's knife would have done to relieve a suffering patient, knowing at the same time that the operation would prove fatal to the operator. We deplore the death of André Chénier, the young poet; of Lavoisier, the great scientific chemist; of the accomplished and energetic Madame Roland, the good-natured, harmless King, and the proud and innocent Marie Antoinette; but in none of these have we the picture of so deliberate a sacrifice as that made by the enthusiastic and courageous Charlotte Corday. Well, indeed, may she have inspired poets and dramatists!

As to Necker, if he had been nothing more than an obscure citizen of Geneva, if he had not passed the most active part of his life amidst the temptations and seductions of Paris, his private character would, even then, have been an object of astonishment and admiration to all who knew him. In England, the genuine worth of this man, the benefits which the example of his career has conferred on others, are very little known, and consequently unappreciated; our historians make comparatively little mention of him. He is no

more understood by many of our modern politicians than he was by those place-hunters and deluded ministers who surrounded him in France. Louis XVI. himself appears to have duly appreciated his valuable services; but then Louis XVI. was not his own master, and could not make use of him as he might have done. Morality, which was the sole guide of Necker's conduct, could ill cope with the immorality so prominent among both the friends and enemies of the Court.

Necker arrived in Paris when he was fifteen years of age, with very moderate means at his disposal. His parents were anxious that he should improve his position by commercial pursuits. From that moment he had to rely upon his own resources, and became the sole guide of his actions. Single-handed, he rose in the world around him to that degree of eminence he so well deserved. His fortune, and that of his whole family, were due to his own unaided exertions. It was twenty years from this time before he married, and during the whole of that long interval he laboured incessantly. So absorbed was he in his work, and so habituated had he become to it, that during those twenty years he did not enjoy any one of the ordinary pleasures of life. It was this unremitting labour, connected

with banking and dealing in corn, that fitted him so well for the responsible posts he afterwards filled in the Government.

With all this energy and perseverance, Necker was a timid man, anxious to do always that which was right, and never certain that he had succeeded in doing so. Had he not quitted business so early in life, he might have made a very large fortune, could he have brought himself to believe that great wealth would bring him happiness. In doubtful matters he invariably decided against himself, rather than risk the chance of doing wrong to another. His modesty amounted to bashfulness in his more youthful years.

When about thirty-five years of age, Necker married Mademoiselle Curchod, the first love of Gibbon the historian, a lady of good education and amiable manners, whose family had been ruined by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and until the day of her death he was the most devoted of husbands. It was very shortly after this marriage that he was selected Genevese Minister at Paris, and refused to receive any emoluments from his country for his services. Later, when he was Minister of State, he was accused of pride, because he was the first member of the French Government who had ever refused the high salaries at-

tached to such a position. Necker went beyond this; he actually spent a portion of his own capital to defray the great expenses of his post. It was not pride that caused him to resolve on this line of conduct, but the wretched state of French finances. This obliged him, as Minister, to reduce the salaries of those below him, and he had not the heart to do so whilst receiving his own. He had, indeed, more strength wherewith to reform abuses of this kind, when he could point to his own personal sacrifices.

As soon as he had entered upon public life, he made over all his private fortune to his wife, so that she might have the sole management of his domestic affairs, which she undertook with rare talent and circumspection.

Necker's biography of "Colbert," and his treatise on the "Legislation and Commerce of Wheat" had stamped him as a man of talent. In spite of his being a Swiss and a Protestant, his genial and upright manners had surrounded him with friends, and he was soon admitted to the King's Council. His writings excited the admiration of Maurepas, who, in 1777, made him Director of the Royal Treasury, at a time when the finances of France already required a man of genius at the head of this department.

It has been said that Necker did not know the human heart, as he always imagined that he could lead men by moral reasons. But his writings, even those little comedies and light pieces that he composed in his youth, supply a permanent denial to this trivial accusation. Whilst only filling the office of Genevese Minister, he inspired M. de Choiseul, then the most powerful member of the French Government, with such affection for him, that he would not hear of Geneva sending any one in his place. Once it was thought desirable to do so, but Choiseul wrote to Necker: "Tell your Genevese people that their *Envoyé Extraordinaire* of whom they speak, shall not put his foot into my house, and that I will deal with none but you." Necker used to look upon this as his first political success.

It was during the interval when Maurepas was unwell and unable to attend to business, that Necker, for the first time, worked alone with the King, and persuaded His Majesty to nominate a M. de Castries, a good and able man, to the Ministry of Marine. This nomination showed the credit he had already gained with the King, and became the principal cause of Maurepas' jealousy, which was not long in making itself felt. The Queen also, before party

politics had envenomed everything, was frequently seen in ardent conversation with Necker, and set a high value upon his advice.

When Mirabeau was anxious to become a colleague of Necker's in the Ministry, the latter told him in a most straightforward manner that they could never work together, the strength of the one being based entirely upon morality, and that of the other upon politics only. Mirabeau seems to have been quite satisfied, and by no means offended at this honourable declaration, at least, not at that time.

However, the rigid economy that he found himself obliged to insist on, brought down upon Necker a number of libels, which emanated from Maurepas, Mirabeau, and other dissatisfied courtiers. On the other hand, the publicity which he gave to the real state of finance, his suppression of taxes which weighed heavily upon the poorer classes, and several other great and good actions, caused nothing but admiration on the part of the French people. He was, indeed, the idol of the people, in spite of the vicious things circulated to his detriment. Nevertheless, matters arrived at such a pitch that Necker suddenly sent in his resignation. He afterwards regretted this step immensely, when thinking of

the good he might still have done had he paid no attention to these calumnies and continued to fill his post in spite of them.

It was at this period that the Empress Catherine of Russia wrote to Baron Grimm the following words, which show how Necker was appreciated abroad :—

"St. Petersburg, 10/21st of July, 1781.

"So Necker has lost his place! This is a fine dream for France to have had; and a great victory for her enemies! The character of so rare a man may be admired in both his works, for the *Mémoire* is quite equal to the *Compte-rendu*. The King of France has had a glorious fellow near him. Now, he will not have the chance again so soon! Necker should have had a man of genius to follow in his great strides."

In 1787 M. de Calonne called together the *notables* and, in his opening discourse attacked the *Compte-rendu* of Necker. The latter felt bound to reply to this public accusation, and in spite of the King's wishes that he should remain silent, (Louis XVI. knowing well that Necker was in the right,) he published his refutation, and, in consequence, the King felt bound to

banish him to a distance of forty leagues from Paris by a *lettre de cachet.* However, His Majesty put a term to this exile in four months, and shortly afterwards, on the 25th August, 1788, Necker was recalled to the Ministry. He had then just published his remarkable work "On the Importance of Religious Opinions," a most appropriate book for the times, and the best of the kind that appeared at this eventful period.

The second Ministry of Necker lasted from that date to the 11th July, 1789. No person who reads his works or studies his life can be persuaded that he ever dreamt of bringing on a revolution, as his enemies have suggested. So far was this from his ideas, that he always believed the best social state for a large and powerful country to be a limited monarchy, such as we have in England; this thought predominates in all his writings; and who can doubt the respect he entertained for the King after his conduct on the day just named?

On the 11th July, 1789, as Necker was about to sit down to dinner, with a number of friends, the Minister of Marine asked to see him, took him aside, and gave him a letter from the King, ordering him to resign, and to leave Paris

at once, "as quietly as possible" *(sans bruit)*. Great stress was thrown upon the words *sans bruit*. Doubtless, if the people heard of his dismissal, there would have been an uproar, and he would have been forcibly detained in Paris. In spite of his enormous popularity at this time, he resolved at once to obey the King's orders. His own family were not even admitted into the secret. His wife alone, though suffering from indisposition, accompanied him, without any servant. They quitted Paris that very evening in their own carriage, and went straight to Brussels, where the remainder of the family joined them three days afterwards, and found them in the dresses —not a little soiled by dust—in which they had received their friends at dinner immediately before leaving. During the whole of that memorable dinner not one of the numerous guests had the slightest notion of what was about to happen, so perfectly did Necker control his feelings.

He travelled under a feigned name, and did not even take a passport, for fear of betraying the secret of his departure and the King's wishes. At Valenciennes, the governor of the place refused to let him proceed. Necker showed him the King's letter, and he was, moreover, recog-

nized by an engraving (his portrait) which hung in the office of the custom-house.

Brussels was chosen instead of Switzerland, as the Belgian frontier was easier reached. He then prepared to start for Switzerland, through Germany. Whilst doing so, he suddenly remembered that, a short time previously, the bankers, Messrs. Hope, of Amsterdam, had requested him to guarantee them *personally* with regard to a supply of corn, valued at two millions of francs, to be delivered in France. Necker had deposited this money, from his own private resources, in the Royal Treasury, and he gave the guarantee, for Paris was already more or less famished. Thinking that Messrs. Hope might cease their supplies, if they heard of his resignation, he wrote to them from Brussels, to the effect that he still abided by the agreement. One of the first things that his ephemeral successor had on hand was a letter from these bankers, saying that they accepted Necker's *personal* guarantee! It is hard to imagine what *he* thought of a man who not only received no salary, but risked (and eventually lost) the greater part of his fortune to save Paris from starvation—and that man *not a Frenchman!*

Necker left Brussels with his son-in-law, M. de Staël, *en route* for Basle; his wife and daughter

were to follow more leisurely. These ladies, on arriving at Frankfort, met a special messenger from Paris, bearing letters from the King, calling Necker for the third time to the Ministry. "What a moment of happiness," says Madame de Staël, "was this journey from Basle to Paris. . . . . Nothing like it ever happened to any man who was not the Sovereign of the country through which he passed." Acclamations and *vivas* accompanied him everywhere, and, on arriving at Paris, the enthusiasm of the crowd was so great, that the distinguished General Junot was seriously hurt in endeavouring to maintain order.

A year of scarcity, such as had not been experienced in France for more than a century, added to the political catastrophes of 1789-90. It was during this dreadful period that Necker, by his indefatigable and unostentatious efforts, saved Paris and several provincial towns from absolute famine. His exertions, day and night, in getting grain from every available source were so incessant, that he contracted a severe illness, a long and dangerous bilious attack, which contributed to shorten the days of his valuable life.

During the fifteen months that his last ministry existed, he exerted himself constantly in favour of the Executive, both in the Assembly and out

of it, whilst Mirabeau and others did all they could to render his name unpopular. In spite of this, his popularity still enabled him to save several lives that were menaced, and to continue his good works in various directions. At last, calumny of all kinds caused him to lose favour, both at Court and with the people. In 1790, he found his fondest hopes rapidly fading, and his excellent projects falling to the ground. Moreover, his house was threatened by the mob, and his wife felt that their lives were in danger. So, as he could no longer be of any use whatever, Necker quitted Paris. He left behind him a "Mémoire sur les Assignats," in which he foretold the ruin which awaited the creditors of the State; and yet he left his own two millions of francs in the Treasury. He retired to his quiet home at Coppet, near Geneva, where, for the remaining fourteen years of his life, he devoted himself solely to family affairs and the composition of his works; among others, to his excellent "Cours de Morale Réligieuse."

One last trait in his admirable character deserves to be repeated here. He had let one of his houses near Coppet to a poor family at a very low rent. After they left, there came to him, during his retirement, a rich lady, who requested

him to let her have the house at a still lower rent. He resisted at first, but finally succumbed to the lady's entreaties. He then considered it his duty to hand over to the poor family the difference of rent, which, extending over several years, amounted to a good round sum, representing what they had apparently paid over and above the rent he should have received, as compared with that paid by the rich lady.

By the Revolution in Switzerland, and the loss of his two millions of francs in France, Necker was deprived of three-fourths of his income; yet, until his death, no one knew how he was circumstanced, and people judged from his gifts that he must be very wealthy. His will began with the following words: "I thank the Supreme Being for the destiny he has allotted to me on this earth, and I hand over, in all confidence, my future destiny to His goodness and pity."

In one of his notes, written at Coppet, he says: "Seventy is an agreeable age for writing; you have not yet lost all your strength; envy begins to let you alone, and you hear beforehand the sweet voice of posterity."

XVI.

A PRIEST OF THE PERIOD.

JACQUES Anastase Grivet de Fongeray was born at the Château de Fongeray, in Franche-Comté. His father was formerly a captain in an infantry regiment of Burgundy, and had got, as a reward for his numerous campaigns, a constitution crippled by chronic rheumatism, the Cross of St. Louis, and a most undesirable state of confusion in his family affairs. Perfectly convinced, after a long and painful experience, that a military career does not conduct everyone to fame and fortune, he was determined that his young son, Anastase, should become an ecclesiastic, and, for this purpose, he sent him, at an early age, to the high school of Dijon.

There, under the direct tuition of the learned and respectable Abbé de Bouillat, the youthful Anastase de Fongeray made rapid progess in his studies, became distinguished for his exemplary conduct and certain precocious talents, which enabled him, when barely twenty years of age, to carry off a *third* prize in a school competition for the best Greek verses. This astonishing success brought him under the notice of the bishop, who decided to befriend him. A bursary being then vacant in the little seminary of the town, the bishop gave it to him, and he soon became very learned in theology.

When twenty-five years old, he took holy orders the day before Christmas, and preached in the cathedral to the great satisfaction of all the faithful. He took for his text *The happiness of the Chosen People*, and, they say, caused his congregation to participate in it. His elocution was facile and animated; his periods, sonorous and round; his imagination, rich and brilliant. These qualities, however, were the least meritorious points in his sermons. That which took his audience by storm, and gained the entire approval of the connoisseurs, was his splendid description of Paradise. This was given in such detail, so topographical—if we may use the expression—that the preacher

seemed to have just returned from the place he pictured so vividly. Nothing could equal the enthusiasm raised by this sermon; the newspapers of the day asserted that his delicious description of celestial happiness converted the most hardened sinners, upon whom many extremely frightful descriptions of the infernal regions had not had the slightest effect.

It is needless to add that the Abbé de Fongeray soon rose into high estimation at Dijon, and that he was the chosen confessor of all the ladies of distinction and parliamentary counsellors of the district, for many miles round. However, he was ambitious of figuring upon a larger stage, and, as soon as his gigantic reputation had begun to spread abroad, he left for Versailles.

In those days "Society verses" were in high repute at Court—little poems, witty or pathetic, as the case might be, particularly adapted to some conspicuous passing event or notorious personage. A young gentleman, named Monsieur Arouet, more generally known now under that of Voltaire, had made himself quite a reputation by this ephemeral kind of poetic production. On arriving at Versailles, the youthful priest, De Fongeray, conceived the idea of throwing over this idol of fashion, and reigning in his stead. It

was a bold project, no doubt, but somewhat justified by the success which followed it.

He made his *débût* in this style of literature by an epistle to the beauteous Countess du Barri, which was full of art and poetry, and might serve as a classic model of delicate flattery. This little poem pleased the favourite of Louis XV. so much that, in order to recompense the author of it, she procured him a pension of £60 a year, out of the funds devoted to invalid sailors. Those were fine days for literary men, when a single short poem in honour of a monarch's mistress would keep a writer from starving for the rest of his days; even at the expense of invalid mariners!

The Abbé de Fongeray, after the death of Louis XV., published against this same Countess du Barri a satirical poem of the most audacious nature. He might, indeed, by this style of production, have made himself feared; he preferred to make himself beloved. Epigrammatic efforts went against his feelings, his pen was happier in the expression of tender and melancholy sentiments. As he was a guest at the tables of all the great lords, and the very soul of small supper-parties, his singing never tarried, and many appropriate

verses were composed for these occasions. Endless were the poems "to Zelmire," "to Zulmé," and even "to Zetulbé." In 1788 his exertions culminated in "The Muses' Almanack," in which he inserted an anacreontic acrostic on Héloise and Abelard, and, the year afterwards, at the outbreak of the great Revolution, a translation in verse of the Ode of Horace "*Solvitur acris hiems*". . . .

Such work as this, achieved in so short a time, could not pass unnoticed, and it was openly asserted at Versailles that the very first bishopric which became vacant would be given to Monsieur de Fongeray.

Just at this moment the dreadful Revolution broke out. At first the Abbé de Fongeray sided with the Court, and he was meditating a very caustic epigram against the revolutionary innovators, when he found that the majority of the clergy had gone over to the *Tiers Etat!* So, instead of his epigram, he published a poem on the "Oath of the Racket Court," (*Le Serment du Jeu-de-Paume.*) The day of the *Fédération* he said mass to the Bishop of Autun, afterwards Prince de Talleyrand, Grand Chamberlain, and Peer of France.

Soon the Revolution, like a great devastating

torrent, overturned everything that had any kind of superiority attached to it. The great families had already begun to emigrate; but the Abbé de Fongeray had no idea of going to seek his fortune at Coblentz; so he withdrew to a pretty little country house in the neighbourhood of Paris, and changed his name to Grivet, a plebeian denomination that would attract no attention from any quarter. Here, whilst unheard of atrocities were carried on in Paris, he cultivated Bengal roses and double tulips, like a perfect philosopher. As he was a friend of peace, he took the civic oath in a moment, for the sake of quiet; and later on, when they murdered and hung priests whether they had taken the oath or not, he got married—for the sake of peace!

Many persons would accuse him of apostasy, but he could hardly be looked upon as a married priest. He was a priest, it is true, and he got married, that is certain; but, by what other means could he have escaped from the clutches of the barbarians?

He married the daughter of the magistrate of his parish. She was a young and beautiful girl, distinguished no less by her graceful attractions than by her goodness of heart. But alas! death soon broke this pleasant dream of happiness. At

the *Fête de l'Etre Suprême*, it was this young woman, "la Citoyenne Grivet," who was chosen to represent the Goddess of Reason. Being dressed in the lightest attire possible, she caught a violent cold and died.

Grivet remained sad and solitary, composing, amidst tears and despair, an appropriate epitaph to his wife. He was still occupied with this when Buonaparte re-established, on their former basis, religion and monarchy. Once more a priest, De Fongeray got appointed chaplain to one of the Imperial Princesses. He fulfilled his functions with zeal and fidelity; but without ever forgetting (and perhaps regretting) the legitimate branch. Great, indeed, was his joy when the latter returned. Grivet, or rather, De Fongeray, actually went to meet the Comte d'Artois on his arrival at Paris. On this occasion he was bold enough to walk along the boulevards with a white cockade in his hat. All was peace and happiness—but what a fragile peace! The triumphal return of Buonaparte struck De Fongeray so forcibly that he could not help being astonished and admiring the glorious "destiny" of the usurper. He bent his knee before the "man of destiny," and said mass on the *Champ de Mars* the day of the *Champ de Mai*.

The bloody struggle at Waterloo convinced him that it was no use counting any longer on Buonaparte; he disguised himself as a National Guard and rushed to meet the King at St. Denis. Satisfied that he had helped to replace Louis XVIII. firmly upon the throne of his ancestors, De Fongeray retired to St. Acheuil, where he passed the rest of his days as a professor of the Greek language, and in the education of young Jesuits, and where he died suddenly of apoplexy on the 17th of April, 1824, at eleven minutes past three o'clock in the morning.

Such was the life and career of a time-server and priest of the period, who may be said to have "dodged" the Revolution. Then there were the priests who did not take the oath, and were massacred, and those who did take the oath and were massacred all the same. The slaughter of those innocent and, for the most part, good men, ranks among the many horrors of the Revolution. A Frenchman writing in 1863, congratulates himself upon the Reign of Terror being a thing of the past. "It is a consolation," he says, "to think that every party condemns it, and though it is not so far back as regards the actual date, yet our ideas, our manners, and our politics, give us

the assurance that it is past for ever, and already a matter of ancient history." Only to think, after reading these lines, of what has happened in 1870-71! Who can doubt that the horrors of 1789-93, might then have been repeated if circumstances had favoured the mob?

Then there were the priests who emigrated; a goodly number came to England, and supported themselves by writing, drawing, giving lessons in French, &c. Such a one was the Abbé Macquin, who died here on the 17th July 1823. He sought refuge from the horrors of 1792, and arrived penniless at Hastings, applied himself vigorously to the study of English, supported himself by his pencil sketches of the scenery around Hastings, got introduced to Norroy, King-at-Arms, who gave him remunerative employment in heraldic designs, edited various literary productions, and published his Latin poem "Tabella Cibaria, or the Bill of Fare," led a peaceful retired life and died in England, respected by all who knew him.

XVII.

THE WOMAN WITHOUT A NAME.

A MOST extraordinary civil action was brought by a lady of good birth and position before one of the French law courts, in the midst of the Revolution. The facts elicited by this suit embrace the whole period occupied by the reign of Louis XVI., and bring to light some occurrences and a judgment so marvellous, that, if every fact could not be vouched for historically, few people would be inclined to believe them.

On the 7th October, 1741, about nine leagues from Auxerre, was born a little girl who was christened Adelaide de Champignelles. We know little of her early life, except that she received her education in a convent, as so many French girls of good family do even now, and that on the 30th August, 1764, she left the convent to

marry a wealthy nobleman, the Marquis de Douhault.

At the time of her marriage she was therefore twenty-three years of age, and had seen absolutely nothing of the world, nor did she know her husband to any extent before she became the Marquise de Douhault. It was a *mariage de convenance;* love had nothing to do with it, but the young lady possessed a kind heart and an intelligent head, and hoped that she would be able to love the man whose existence was henceforward to be joined to hers. Very shortly after the marriage the bride discovered that the bridegroom was afflicted with epilepsy. This was an awful blow; hours of tenderness were replaced by appalling scenes, and instead of a bride she became a nurse. Her good disposition soon enabled the young Marchioness to overcome this dreadful shock; she accepted her sorrowful lot without complaint, and continued day by day to devote the greatest attention to her invalid husband. This courageous conduct was persevered in till the year 1765, when they had been married about twelve months. At this period the husband's malady suddenly degenerated into furious insanity; his excitement and violence rendered it dangerous to wait upon him. His kind-

hearted wife still did all in her power to soothe him; but one day, whilst endeavouring to prevent his cruel treatment of a man servant, she received a sword wound in the breast. This state of things could not be borne any longer, so after due consultation between the two families it was finally decided, in April, 1766, that the Marquis de Douhault should be despatched to the asylum at Charenton, near Paris, where he lived for twenty-one years in a perfect state of insanity, and where he died in March, 1787. During this long interval the unfortunate wife continued to reside at the Château de Chazelet, a property belonging to the Marquis, and led an exemplary and benevolent life.

Madame de Douhault's father had died three years previously, but she still had a mother and a brother, Monsieur de Champignelles, who had already distinguished himself by his bad conduct towards his father, whom he had actually turned out of a house which he inhabited, by substituting his own name for his father's in the renewal of the lease. The father's death gave occasion for the settlement of the mother's claims, which entitled her to a life-interest in all her husband's property, on the condition of paying to her son an income of 4,000 francs a year, and to her

daughter, the Marchioness de Douhault, the sum of 40,000 francs, the half of her dowry, which had never been paid.

It so happened, however, that the vicious son contrived to terrify the mother into accepting an allowance from him of about 11,000 francs a year, he taking possession of all the estates. Madame de Douhault, his sister, being in easy circumstances, and without children, made no great resistance to this rascally proceeding, so that he thus got into his own hands the whole of the paternal inheritance, to the half of which his sister had an equal right, besides her claim of 40,000 francs now, and as much more at her mother's death.

But the poor mother's income was badly paid; more than once she was actually compelled to raise money by causing one of her servants to pledge jewellery for her, and she could get no redress from her wicked son. Matters soon became so bad that the unfortunate woman was obliged to entreat her daughter to join her in instituting legal proceedings, in order to recover their rights.

After endeavouring, in all manner of ways, to persuade her wretched brother to make some sort of compromise, but in vain, the Marchioness

wrote to her mother that she would arrive in Paris early in 1788, and consult with her upon the best steps to be taken.

De Champignelles was thus threatened either with having to restore to his mother the life enjoyment of the property, or with having to share it with his sister. In either case, his sister was an inconvenience. Nevertheless, he actually accepted the consultation with his mother and sister, and seemed anxious to see the matter fairly argued out.

Towards the end of December, 1787, the Marchioness de Douhault set out on her journey to Paris; not without many misgivings and in an anxious state of mind. On travelling to the capital it was her habit to break the journey at Orleans, and to sleep at the house of a M. du Lude, her great-nephew on her husband's side, and consequently one of the parties who would come in for a share of her husband's property after her death. That gentleman happened then to be at Argenton, on the way to Orleans, and she wrote to ask him to accompany her there. He made some frivolous excuse, and she was informed on her arrival at Argenton that he had started for Orleans the moment he received her letter. At Argenton, Madame de Douhault, sent

back her own coachman, and went on with post horses. On reaching Orleans she drove at once to M. du Lude's house as usual; but he again made some paltry excuse, begged her to proceed to the house of a friend, a M. de la Roncière, where a room had been prepared for her, and to send her servant elsewhere to give less trouble to the family.

If a lady who had gone through so many trials could be astonished at anything, she must have been so at this reception; but, having no alternative, she acted as she was told, proceeded to the house in question, where she found a room prepared for her on the ground floor, looking into a courtyard.

Here, say her brother and his partisans in the famous law suit, she fell ill and died on the 18th of January, 1788, and was buried on the 21st of that month.

*   *   *   *   *   *

On Saturday morning the 17th of October, 1791, a lady dressed in black presented herself at the gate of the Château de Champignelles, the brother's residence. On demanding admission, the porter informed her that he was instructed not to allow anyone to enter without a written order from M. de Champignelles.

"But you know me Saint-Loup," said the lady, raising her veil; "I am the Marquise de Douhault, your master's sister."

"Madame la Marquise died some time ago," replied the man, "you had better retire or I shall treat you as an impostor."

The lady turned away, and slept that night in the inn at the little village of Champignelles. Next morning she attended mass at the Church where she was observed by many of the congregation to kneel before a tomb inscribed with the name of Rogres de Champignelles (her father), and prayed while weeping. The persons present watched her with the utmost astonishment, and several exclaimed, "What a striking likeness to the late Madame de Douhault!" For, in that very church, not so long before, a funeral service had been celebrated for the repose of her soul. At last, however, she was so thoroughly recognised that several persons spoke to her. "Yes, my friends," she said, "I am indeed the Marquise de Douhault; my childhood was passed in this domain, where I am now refused admittance!" When this became known throughout the village, there was great rejoicing and congratulations; ninety-six inhabitants of the place testified to her identity, and her brother was

summoned before the "Bureau de Conciliation," for detaining her goods under an illegal title. This summons, having had no effect the lady transferred her suit to the "Tribunal de Saint Fargeau," with the view of reinstating herself in all her rights, titles and goods, and to recover 500,000 francs as damages.

The fact of her being alive instead of being dead and buried at Orleans was explained as follows:—

On the 15th of January, 1788, she prepared to leave Orleans for Paris. That day Madame de la Roncière invited her to take a farewell drive along the river Loire, two other ladies accompanied them. During the drive Madame de la Roncière offered the Marquise de Douhault a pinch of snuff; immediately after taking which she was seized with so violent a headache that she begged to be driven back to the house at once. They gave her a foot bath, and she then fell into a profound sleep. . . . . A wide blank here occurs in the lady's account of herself. All she knew was that she awoke in the Salpétrière at Paris, a hospital for female lunatics. By an effort of memory, she recalled vaguely that after the long sleep at Orleans she had a lucid interval during which Madame de la Roncière urged her

to set off for Paris that very evening. She had a confused remembrance of taking some broth from that lady's hands, of going to Paris, where the image of her brother passed before her eyes, of police agents carrying her off in a closed carriage.

When her reason returned at the hospital, she felt her false position in all its horrible reality; she protested energetically against her confinement, and told them who she was. They replied that she was mistaken, that her name was "Anne Buirette." After seventeen months of this dreadfully painful seclusion, during which time all her letters were intercepted, she succeeded at last in acquainting a powerful friend, no less a personage than the Queen's friend, Madame de Polignac, with the infamous imprisonment practised on her, and that lady procured her release on the 13th of July, 1789. The person who set her free conducted her to the bottom of the Jardin des Plantes and left her. Madame de Douhault thus found herself alone in Paris, ignorant of coming events, and Paris on the eve of a frightful revolution.

She was not aware that her brother had been the cause of her detention, that she was legally dead, that M. de Champignelles with Madame de Douhault's other heirs had divided her property.

She fled to him and was refused admittance; she applied to an uncle who declared he did not know her; but nevertheless invited her to dinner, and informed her that her mother was dead.

Broken down with grief and despair the poor woman went, as a last resource, to Madame de Polignac, at Versailles, there she was recognised by several persons of high rank, among others by the beautiful Princesse de Lamballe. The whole Court were unanimous in believing that the prisoner rescued from the Salpétrière was indeed Adelaïde de Champignelles. Still with her innate goodness of heart, Madame de Douhault did not wish to raise a scandal involving the honour of two families, the more so as her friends advised her to confide in the goodness and justice of the King. But very soon Louis XVI. was powerless and the Court dispersed.

It was in February, 1790, that she resolved to bring a civil action, but through the treachery of her advocates she was sent for a month to the prison of La Force. There she claimed the assistance of Bailly, who was then Mayor of Paris. Bailly knew her and wished to aid her, but he had to reckon with people from whose violence he was unable eventually to rescue his own head. However, she left the prison, and the great trial

duly came on. Every detail of this most infamous legal proceeding has been chronicled, and is now a matter of history. The principal part of the action commenced in February, 1792. It would be absurd here to attempt to give the details. One hundred and fourteen questions were put to the plaintiff, all of which she answered in the most satisfactory manner, with the exception of one, which concerned the date of her entry into the Salpétrière. But this single *lapsus* enabled the judge to pronounce against her! She was accordingly denounced as a vulgar impostor, and although it subsequently appeared that no less than twenty-one of the witnesses had been tampered with, bribed, and threatened by the defendant, matters remained as they were, and the poor Marquise de Douhault was not only deprived of her estates, her money, her titles, and rights of every description, but she was deprived of her name and considered as dead.

If the plaintiff was not Madame de Douhault, who was she? This nobody could tell, by the judgment of the Court the subject of this paper was a woman without a name, without a station, without a title, without an origin; she belonged to nobody, she could claim no relation, she had no position whatever in the world, she could not

appear before a court of law under any denomination she could not perform any act of civil life; she was nothing, nobody, a nonentity! There were no legal means in France of reversing this decision; this was proved by the numerous consultations that occurred upon it even up to the year 1809. Nor was the difficulty removed, as it might have been by the Head of the State. The lady who claimed to be Madame de Douhault remained to the end of her days a woman without a name; and when she died, no one dare inscribe any name upon her tombstone.

This is one of the most remarkable cases in which truth and equity have been sacrificed to forms of law. The learned counsellor, M. Romain De Sèze, (who defended Louis XVI. on his trial) published, in 1808, a dissertation upon the Douhault case, in which he showed that there existed no form of French legislation, nor any power in any Court, no resource, in fact, by which the plaintiff could appeal against the sentence which formally refused her the name she claimed, and prohibited her from assuming it.

XVIII.

CARON DE BEAUMARCHAIS.

PIERRE Augustin Caron was born in January, 1732, in a shop in the Rue St. Denis. His father was a well-known and clever clock-maker and mechanician; he had a tolerably good education and was a man of discernment. He soon became aware of his son's brilliant abilities, and fostered them by every means in his power. Besides this son he had five daughters, all of whom were fond of poetry and music. Pierre Augustin was by no means an indifferent performer on the harp. He had some excuse, in after years, in taking the name of Beaumarchais, as it belonged to a small property of his wife's; more so, indeed, than M. Jean Baptiste Poquelin had when he styled himself Molière, or M. François Arouet when he became Voltaire.

The young Beaumarchais was sent to school at Alfort till he was thirteen and then returned to his father's shop, learned his trade, and, being decidedly handsome, soon became notorious among the ladies for his good looks, his boldness, and his madrigals. Old Caron had considerable difficulty in managing him. One day the young man wrote some letters to the papers to defend his invention of a new pendulum movement, which the celebrated watch-maker Lepaute appears to have more or less pirated. The result was so cleverly gained, that young Caron obtained permission to write himself "Clock-maker to the King" (Louis XV.) He was then twenty-four years of age, and of very prepossessing manners and appearance. Nor was he long in attracting the attention of persons who, in those times, "kissed away" places of trust and emolument in France. Madame Francquet, the wife of a *contrôleur* of the King's household, persuaded her old and infirm husband to dispose of his sinecure for a yearly rent to the handsome young man, and when old Francquet died, she bestowed on him her hand and the "fief" of Beaumarchais. A few months after this the lady was carried off by typhus fever.

In after years, the adversaries of Beaumarchais

put the worst construction on the deaths of Francquet and his wife, accusing the survivor of foul play on the occasion.

The reputation of the young widower as a wonderfully clever clock-maker, as a player on the harp, and as one of the handsomest and wittiest men of the day, soon reached the Court. Coming to the ears of the four dull daughters of Louis XV., they desired to see him, to hear him, and to take lessons from him. Thus he became a performer in the family concerts which the Princesses gave once a week. This patronage raised a storm of jealousy in various quarters, and led Beaumarchais into many scrapes, and one or two duels. It is said that in one of these he killed his man, without any seconds being present, but that the old King and the Princesses got the matter hushed up. A courtier, who boasted that he would put down this upstart favourite, stopped him in the midst of a large group of persons and desired him to examine his watch. Beaumarchais begged to be excused, as he had given up watch-making and "had become very awkward." But the other pressed him again, until Beaumarchais, taking the watch in his hand and pretending to examine it, let it fall heavily upon the floor, saying, with a low

bow, "Sir, I warned you of my extreme awkwardness," and left the gentleman to pick up his broken watch.

In spite of this Court patronage, however, the young adventurer, for we can scarcely call him by any other name, found an empty purse a serious difficulty in the way of his advancement. He was determined to rise, and a ladder was soon found in the person of M. Paris Duverney, a well known financier, and a satellite of the famous Madame de Pompadour. Duverney, in return for a service which Beaumarchais had done him in inducing the four Princesses and the King to visit the *Ecole Militaire* in order to bring it into notoriety, lent him 500,000 francs, to enable him to purchase the position of Grand Master of the Woods and Forests, then vacant. But the son of Caron the watch-maker was declared ineligible.

In 1764 Beaumarchais set out for Spain on some secret business, and with a purse well filled by Duverney, he at once established himself in a brilliant position at the Spanish Court; but his projects were not crowned by a solid success. Many years before old Caron had been consulted on some mechanical problem by the Governor of Madrid, and he had two daughters residing

there. Marie Louise Caron, the second daughter, who joined her married sister as a milliner in that city, was the heroine of the Clavijo adventure, which Göthe subsequently took as the theme for his tragedy. In fact, when Beaumarchais arrived at Madrid, his first object was to vindicate the honour of his sister, when she was left at the altar's foot by Señor Clavijo. He managed to cover the calumniator with shame and to marry his sister to a M. Durand.

On his return to Paris, Beaumarchais endeavoured without success to gain the affections of a young and extremely wealthy Creole, whom he met at his father's house. But this damsel, who was said to possess a vast fortune in St. Domingo, was carried off under his very nose by a rival suitor. In 1768, when thirty-six years of age, he had so far forgotten this grief—grief at the loss of some monies which he asserted he had advanced to the young Creole—that he married a Madame Levèque, a widow who brought him a brilliant fortune. Besides this, by the help of Duverney, he purchased from the State a large tract of the Forest of Chinon, which he farmed. Shortly after his return from Madrid he produced two plays, "Eugénie" and "Les Deux Amis," which were

performed at the Comédie Française. They had little or no success.

The second Madame Beaumarchais died within four years of her marriage, and the son she bore to the dramatist died a year or two later. It was maliciously rumoured that he had poisoned both his wife and the child.

Coincident with his attempts at drama, Beaumarchais was plunged into the first of those lawsuits which figure so prominently in his "Memoirs." This was a dispute between himself and the heir of Paris Duverney, a Count de la Blache. On Duverney's death, Beaumarchais sent in large accounts against the estate, and La Blache accused him of forgery. The fact could not be proved, but the whole proceeding was most damaging to his reputation. Later on, came the well known Goëzmann trial and a new disgrace. In fact, what with the scandals connected with his name, and his reputation for ingenuity and enterprise, by no means diminished by the production of his "Memoirs," few persons were more notorious in Paris, about the year 1774, than the *Sieur* Caron de Beaumarchais.

In spite of the disgrace brought upon him by the sentence in the above mentioned trial, the old King, on learning that he possessed great

tact in negociating matters of delicacy, employed him to silence a libeller named Thévénau de Morande, residing in London, who interfered with the peace of his old age. In this case, the manuscript and some 3000 copies of the "Memoirs of Madame du Barri" were burnt in a lime-kiln in the neighbourhood of London, but at the exorbitant price of 20,000 francs paid down by the French Government, and a sum of 4,000 francs a year to the infamous libeller. In after years, Louis XVI. compounded for the payment of this income by laying down a second sum of 20,000 francs.

Some time afterwards, when Louis XVI. and his young consort were likewise libelled by a fellow named Atkinson, who wrote under the name of Angelucci, and published simultaneously in London and Amsterdam, Beaumarchais treated with him and silenced him with £1,400, but not without considerable trouble. The knave actually started for Nuremberg with a surreptitious last copy of the book, and with the intention of having it reprinted; but our expert hero followed him under the disguised name of M. de Ronac (anagram of Caron) overtook him and frustrated his designs.

The next piece of "secret service" in which

he was engaged was the bribing of the celebrated diplomatic agent, a lady known as the Chevalier d'Eon, noted for her courage and skill with the rapier as a duellist. For this he was restored to social position by the annulling of the sentence of the Courts against him; nothing could better point to the rotten state of society in France at this period.

His dramatic efforts had by this time produced "The Barber of Seville," which was originally written in the form of a comic opera, the plot of which he brought from Spain. In 1772 his original piece was refused, on account of the principal singer having been formerly a barber or a barber's assistant. On this, the opera was transformed into a comedy and accepted by the Théâtre Français; but the author being put in prison, as the result of a quarrel with the Duke de Chaulnes, on the very night announced for its performance, it was withdrawn. A year later the "Barbier" was again announced, and so much attention had Beaumarchais and his affairs by this time excited, that every box and seat were taken for the first five nights. However, the production was forbidden on the day for which the representation was fixed, on account of the many allusions to the Goezmann trial with

which he had spiced the story. At last, after undergoing a great many changes of various sorts, "Le Barbier de Séville" was brought out in 1775, and, on the first night was a perfect failure. The author withdrew the piece at once, cut out an entire act, modified the scenes and the dialogue, and two night's later it was played with triumphant success.

The French Government then began to employ Beaumarchais in American politics, and he was for some time engaged in financial operations referring to the American war; "secret service," "indirect agency" and "army contracts," proving in no small degree remunerative to such a clever and unscrupulous negotiator. His appeal against the judgment convicting him of forgery in the La Blache trial was successful at Aix, and brought him into more prominence than ever. In 1779 he engaged in the mad freak of publishing a complete edition of Voltaire's works, and an edition in one hundred and sixty-two volumes, comprising two editions, a cheap one and an expensive one, duly appeared, which speculation turned out a complete failure.

That he turned the notice attracted to him to the fullest account, both for public and private purposes, may be taken for granted. There was

no such "busy-body" in the whole of Europe, and in the midst of all these intrigues and negotiations, money lending, financing, &c., Beaumarchais managed to write and bring out the best of his plays "Le Mariage de Figaro," in which he hits off the taste and temper of French society immediately before the outbreak of the Revolution. Hindrances were thrown in the way of its representation, but a blaze of party triumph attended its production. The subtle manner in which the unfortunate Marie Antoinette was prevailed on to become the protectress of a piece pronounced by the authorities to be so inflammable, constitutes a master-stroke of craft.

Never, in the whole history of literature, was success better managed, never were cunning and the experience of human weakness better combined than in the case of this play. Beaumarchais was fifty-three years of age on its production, and many authors rank it next to Molière's plays, as a purely literary work.

In 1785 or '86, the Comte de Mirabeau made the acquaintance of the author of the "Mariage," and being very short of funds at the time asked him, in that light way which belongs to borrowers

of quality, to lend him 12,000 francs. Beaumarchais politely and jestingly declined.

"But it would be easy enough for you to lend me this sum," said the Count.

"It would, doubtless," was Beaumarchais' answer, "but as it must come to a quarrel with you when settling day arrives, I would as soon that the quarrel came to-day, since I shall gain 12,000 francs by it."

This little anecdote exhibits Beaumarchais' character most effectually. The quarrel with Mirabeau broke out shortly afterwards with regard to some water company, and our adventurer's reputation was not bettered by it. Neither did a fresh law-suit instituted against him by the Alsatian banker, Cornman—which was most disreputable to all connected with it—enhance his reputation for fair dealing either with men or women; and when the Revolution came, the author of the "Mariage de Figaro" found that his credit and reputation were rapidly decaying.

The libretto to the opera of "Tartare," which he wrote for Glück, but which the latter passed on to Salieri, met with some degree of success at the Grand Opéra. His other play "La Mère Coupable" is eclipsed by the "Barbier" and the "Mariage."

As soon as Beaumarchais had " by fair means or foul" acquired a considerable fortune, and provided for his father and sisters, he set to work to build himself a house upon a tract of land which he purchased near the Bastille. On this he spent about 1,673,000 francs. The mansion was furnished in the most luxurious style, and he used to call himself " the first poet in Paris, as you come in by the Porte St. Denis and turn to the left."

For two years he enjoyed this " peaceful hermitage;" for two years were the splendours of this " royal residence " shared by his friends and his family; then came the times of trouble, suspicion, spoliation, flight, and a series of adventures and intrigues which give point to the saying that this extraordinary man lived ten lives whilst other people lived one.

In 1799 he was found dead in his bed aged sixty-seven years and three months, leaving the family fortunes in a state of the greatest confusion. One of the Paris Boulevards bears his name; it covers the site where his celebrated mansion and grounds once existed.

It may perhaps be gleaned from the foregoing brief and very incomplete sketch of the life and adventures of this remarkable man, that Beau-

marchais was the creature of the dissolute times in which he lived. He was not a vulgar impostor like Cagliostro, nor a dreamy deceptive enthusiast like Mesmer, but a refined *intriguant* of the cleverest type, and a man of uncommon natural abilities. He began his unscrupulous career by taking advantage of his good looks; his first patron was "a satellite of Madame de Pompadour." A woman crops up at every point of his history, at every undertaking, and every adventure with which he is connected. Weak minded men were everywhere his tools, and the Parisian public, blind to his faults and disgraces, idolized him as a hero. To his energy, boldness, and natural talents, he owed his enormous fortune, and powerful influence, as soon as his love intrigues had secured him a first step in the ladder of fame. No man was ever more active or persevering, witness his determination to put down the claim of Lepaute, the watchmaker, to get himself made watchmaker to the Court; to derive pecuniary advantages at the expense of his admirers and at the risk of his character; to produce his "Barber of Seville" in spite of all obstacles; to gain his law-suits, &c. In the next place his impudence and entire want of modesty caused him to succeed where a noble-hearted man would have

failed, or rather would have remained inactive. Joined to this we have his knowledge of music, his poetical gifts, and his literary ability which was very great. His "Mariage de Figaro" alone would have handed his name down to posterity, but without the author's unenviable notoriety at the time of its production, it might never have seen the light. The corrupt manners of the eighteenth century are vividly reflected in his career, and we may safely consider Beaumarchais as one of those men who are both famous and infamous at the same time.

XIX.

THE BARREL OF GOLD.

THE celebrated lawyer Berryer, who practised his profession during the whole period of the French Revolution, and published his interesting "Souvenirs" in 1839, has left us many striking episodes of this epoch. We are indebted to him for the following curious history, the facts of which occurred during the first war in La Vendée, and gave rise to a suit in which he was engaged some years afterwards.

When the war in La Vendée broke out, the Marquis de Sourdis and his family lived upon a small estate situated near the borders of the insurgent country. The first successes of the Republicans brought their troops within so short a distance of this property, that the owners thought it advisable to secure their safety in

flight. Shortly before this, the Marquis, as a special precaution, had supplied himself with a very considerable sum in gold coin and had filled a moderately large barrel with it. When the time of departure arrived, he placed this barrel upon a cart along with his other effects, and covered the whole with branches of trees. In front of the cart were placed his wife and his three young children, the eldest of which was scarely eight years old. The Marquis himself walked by the side of the horses, and conducted the expedition without the aid of any servant, so that no person should know the locality in which he was about to seek refuge from the bloodthirsty Republicans.

He had chosen for this purpose the dwelling of an old comrade and fellow officer, a most devoted friend, who resided in the centre of a tract of country known as " Le Bocage." Soon after the refugees had arrived, and were safely housed in this quiet, retired and hospitable domain, the Marquis confided to his friend the existence of the aforesaid barrel of gold among his luggage, and consulted with him as to the safest manner of secreting it, in case of accident. It was resolved to bury it in a certain spot which was only known to the Marquis, his host, and the two

ladies. This is an important feature in the story; each husband and wife were present when the gold was interred, and no other persons knew anything about it.

In the course of a short time the Republican arms gained ground considerably in the direction of Le Bocage, and the two officers, le Marquis de Sourdis and his host, determined at once to join the Vendeans, and help them to resist the encroachments of the enemy. Unfortunately this enterprise was unsuccessful, both young men were killed in the first skirmish whilst fighting gallantly at the head of the insurgent band; and almost immediately afterwards the quiet retreat in the centre of Le Bocage was surrounded by the victorious revolutionists. The Marquise de Sourdis with her children and her hostess had only just time to fly precipitately from the house; getting separated in the anxiety of the moment, they fled in different directions. The young Marchioness and her three little children took refuge in the thickest portion of an outlying coppice which belonged to the estate; there she crawled into the brushwood, covered her children with some shawls which she had snatched up on leaving the house, and managed to induce them to keep perfectly quiet though they could scarcely

understand the danger of their position. Whither her hostess had fled, the terrified Marchioness was quite ignorant. This retreat into the coppice was not effected a moment too soon, for they were hardly hidden there before groups of Republican soldiers penetrated every nook and corner of the property, with the bayonet fixed to the end of their guns. In the course of the afternoon, several came within an incredibly short distance of the Marquise and her young children; a single cry from the latter would have betrayed their hiding place and cost them their lives. But they escaped providentially without discovery, and an advance of some of the Vendean band caused the Republicans to fall back upon the main body. The Marquise immediately profited by thi s retreat to escape from the coppice, she wandered towards the tract of country already spoken of as Le Bocage, and received hospitality wherever charity, similarity of feeling or party-spirit would afford her refuge.

For a considerable length of time did the Marquise de Sourdis and her three children lead this precarious kind of life, wandering from house to house, from village to village, until La Vendée became pacified for the first time; this gave her an opportunity of seeking her former

home and her friends. She found her estate devastated, her comfortable château levelled with the ground, her gardens and plantations trodden down and destroyed, her farm burnt and pillaged. Not a thing remained to her in the whole world, but the barrel of gold which her late husband had deposited, as we have seen, in the hospitable mansion in the *pays du Bocage*.

Not doubting for a moment that this precious charge would be delivered over to her as soon as she asked for it, the Marquise de Sourdis repaired to the residence of her friend, whom she found surrounded by a group of visitors, and in excellent spirits. Nevertheless, the apparition of the Marquise appeared to cause some embarrassment. When she desired to seek for the barrel which contained the whole of her fortune, the lady did not hesitate to give the necessary orders in a moment, but would not take part in the search herself. She thought that she remembered something about a barrel which was brought with the luggage of the Marquise, but declared that she never knew what it contained, nor had she any idea where it had been hidden. All this was afterwards declared before the court. Being so entirely ignorant in all these matters, she would not render herself responsible in any way by

helping to seek for it. This extraordinary language was duly noted at the time by the party interested, and came forward at the trial to be alluded to in the sequel.

The disconsolate Marquise and her friend's servants proceeded at once to search the spot which she remembered so well, the outward appearance of which was not changed in the least since her stay in the house; but in spite of diggings and excavations in every direction, not a vestige of the treasure could be found. At the same time, the poor Marquise de Sourdis could not help observing that a marked improvement had taken place in her friend's affairs since they last met. Her farms, which had been burnt, had been rebuilt, her house repaired, her lands laid out anew; no expense seemed to have been spared. Yet everyone in the neighbourhood knew that before the raid of the Republican troops the family was decidedly poor, money was often scarce, and the result of the crops most anxiously looked forward to; whilst now every little whim and fantasy appeared to be satisfied, and money was evidently much more plentiful than formerly.

Having collected these observations, and with a heavy heart, the Marquise retired to Paris,

and commenced an action at law against her friend, to enforce her to make good the value of the barrel of gold. The latter did not deny that such a deposit had really been made on her estate, but asserted that it was not confided to her, and that she was ignorant of the spot in which the said deposit had been made.

The worst portion of the defendant's evidence related to the fact, that after returning to the property from which she had fled so precipitately, she had caused certain excavations to be made, about which nothing had transpired, and when questioned as to the cause of this work, or the reasons for which it was undertaken, no satisfactory explanations were forthcoming. They were stated to have formed part of the work done during the repairs of her property devastated by the Republican soldiers; but why they had occurred only in a certain place, and to a certain depth, and why the earth in this locality had merely been loosely filled in, without any apparent motive, could not be satisfactorily accounted for by the defendant.

The case of the Marquise de Sourdis appeared at first sight to be grounded upon

an important basis and had every probability of a successful issue, but the tribunal taking a rigorously legal view of the matter, decided that there was not sufficient proof to render the friend of the Marquise responsible; it could not be clearly made out that she received the barrel of gold as a deposit to take charge of it, in order to restore it afterwards to its rightful owner. The verdict was appealed against in the 'Court of Cassation;' but this tribunal decided, with regret, that the appeal must be thrown out, and so the precious deposit was lost for good. It was one of the few important cases in which Berryer was unsuccessful.

XX.

"MADAME LA RESSOURCE."

IT was a curious scene when Phillis, the guitar-player—father of the fascinating Mademoiselle Phillis, who created some sensation in Grétry's music as an opera singer—was brought before the Revolutionary tribunal as a "suspect." Nothing more frightful can be conceived than that ferocious law which allowed the so-called "domiciliary visits" or house-breaking by law!

The gates of the town were closed; no one could escape, and by six o'clock in the evening every one was obliged to be within his own doors, in order that the bloodthirsty thieves might come and seek out their victims and lead them to prison and to death.

In the whole annals of mankind we find nothing more abominable and cowardly than this. The said *visites domiciliaires* were a fit *pendant* to the September massacres of the year 1792, when priests, women, noblemen, soldiers and citizens of all kinds, to the number of many thousands, perished; and it opened the way to the murder of thousands more! How easy it was for these despotic ruffians to assert that some person against whom they had a private pique, was a "suspect," lead him before the already mentioned tribunal, give him a kind of mock trial, for the sake of appearances, and then murder him! Here and there a clever individual managed to hide himself, some escaped miraculously to distant countries, and one or two got let off by the brutes who sat in judgment over them.

Such was the case with our guitar-player. His "trial" appears, according to the memoirs of the time, to have consisted almost entirely in the following dialogue between himself and the coarse President of the tribunal:—

"What is your real name?"

"Phillis."

"What do you do?"

"I play the guitar."

"What did you do under the tyrant?" (Allusion to Louis XVI., who had just been executed.)

"I played the guitar."

"What are you going to do for the Republic?"

"I shall play the guitar."

The interrogatory did not proceed any further. It was impossible by any means, however foul, to find this man guilty or dangerous, so the distinguished guitarist and composer was set free.

Musicians escaped marvellously from the deadly shafts of the Revolution. The guillotine that mowed down lawyers, bankers, politicians, men of science, authors, and even poets and women, appears to have respected musicians. The theatre and the concert-room do not figure much in the bloody annals of the Communists; and though many professional artistes, and, maybe, *virtuosi* of eminence, must have perished in the wholesale massacres at Paris, Nantes, Lyons, &c., yet all the great composers and lyric artistes managed to elude the fearful havoc. Perhaps this may be accounted for to some extent by the vagabond life such people mostly

lead. They have rarely any home, properly so-called, are constantly travelling, and settle only for a short period at a time in any city. Then, as in the case of the guitarist just alluded to, it is difficult to drift them into politics of any kind. The great violinist, Viotti, and his pupil, Rode, alone appear to have got into some difficulties, in later times, by their Republican principles. Lastly, it seems that the most ferocious beings which nature ever created had some kind of respect for the charms of music.

What a wonderful scene was enacted at Marseilles on the 15th of August, 1785, barely four years before the great outbreak, when Madame St. Huberty, the celebrated *cantatrice*, then in the height of her fame, visited that town! The most distinguished ladies escorted her to the pavilion in a gondola, which was surrounded by at least two hundred little boats crowded with persons of all classes. She was saluted with a salvo of artillery, as if she had been some distinguished general. The Greek ladies of Marseilles presented her with a magnificent costume, which she wore at this *fête*, the most pleasing gift, perhaps, that a woman could receive. After having disembarked amidst the acclamations

of the people and the roar of cannon, she proceeded to witness a water-tournament, being rowed there in a sumptuous gondola that had been expressly prepared for her. On landing again, the people danced round her with tambourines and escorted her to an illuminated pavilion, where they had erected a *théâtre champêtre*, in which a little allegorical piece, written in her honour by a native poet, was performed. Then followed a ball; and, after that, magnificent fireworks, illuminations, and a splendid supper. On leaving the town next day, Madame St. Huberty bore away on the roof of her carriage more than a hundred coronets, some of which were of great value.

Who was this Madame St. Huberty? Her real name was Clavel—Antoinette Clavel, or Antoinette Cécile Clavel. She was born of French parents, at the little German town of Toul, in 1756. Her father had been a soldier, but being a good musician, had embraced the musical profession and got appointed superintendent of rehearsals to a French opera company in the service of the Elector Palatine. Very early in life it was observed that Mademoiselle Clavel had a delicious voice, but that

was all she possessed. She did not promise to become a handsome woman, though her countenance was full of intelligence and her manners refined and agreeable.

When about sixteen or seventeen years of age, she began to sing in public, and obtained some degree of success in Germany, but nothing that would have induced anyone to dream of the brilliant future that was in store for her. She sang under her own name of Clavel in the first instance, and how or why she came to take the name of Madame St. Huberty is one of those profound mysteries which no historian has been able to solve. Why she was surnamed "Madame la Ressource," we know much better.

Whilst performing his duties in 1770 at Manheim, the father, with the troupe to which he belonged, formed an engagement for the Opera at Warsaw, in which town the leader of the orchestra, Lemoyne, also a Frenchman, gave the young singer lessons during four years that they stayed there, and afterwards brought her out as a *prima donna* in his own little opera called "Le Bouquet de Colette." She next sang at Berlin, where it is stated she married a M. de Croisy, of whom we hear no more—but this is doubtful—and then performed for three years at

Strasburg, still under the name of Clavel. At last she reached Paris, and made her *débût* there in Glück's "Armida" on the 23rd of September, 1777, but only in a minor *rôle*.

Here we have the career of an operatic queen, a namesake of Queen Marie Antoinette, which comprises the whole period of the French Revolution.

At Paris she was hardly noticed at first, and could obtain none but secondary characters. Her salary was a mere pittance, and she could scarcely live upon it. She resided (the term is quite ironical) at the top of a large house in the Rue du Mail, her room was a mere garret, and we are assured that the whole of her furniture consisted of a little bed and a trunk which she used as a chair.

In person, Madame St. Huberty—for that was the name she had now adopted—was small, delicate looking, and fair; her features were not finely formed, and she had rather a large mouth; but her face was very expressive. Her singing was marred by a strong hard German accent, anything but pleasant to French ears, and she was extremely nervous both as a singer and an actress. Assiduous efforts were requisite to overcome these defects.

She attended rehearsal every day with the greatest punctuality, and on these occasions Madame St. Huberty was invariably attired in an old shabby black dress, that she had no money to replace; for her husband, if she really had one at that time, appears to have been no better off than herself. The other singers who flaunted around in silks, laces and jewellery, looked down upon this poor unfortunate Mademoiselle Clavel, made fun of her fine theatrical name of Madame St. Huberty, and ended by calling her "Madame la Ressource," a nickname derived from a thrifty personage in one of Regnard's plays. Glück, the great composer, had alone observed the superiority of Madame St. Huberty's style of singing; he alone had foreseen that she would, some day, outstrip all those dazzling butterflies of mediocre musical talent who scarcely condescended to notice her, and who never allowed her the chance of a good part. He alone encouraged her arduous endeavours to gain a livelihood by the only means in her power. One day, in the presence of this great master, a pert actress, on seeing Madame St. Huberty enter the theatre, said, "Oh! here comes Madame la Ressource." The term struck Glück. "Yes!" he exclaimed turning to the speaker, "you may well call her

'Madame la Ressource,' for the day will come when this girl will be the sole resource of the Opera House." Some believe the nickname to have been invented by Sophie Arnould, and probably with much truth. From that moment, Glück used every effort to develop the powers of his *protégée*, and when Sophie Arnould and Mademoiselle de Beaumesnil retired, Madame St. Huberty got an opportunity of appearing (on the 12th of May, 1778) as Angélique, in Piccini's opera of "Roland," and obtained her first undoubted success.

The exertions of poor Antoinette to improve her singing and acting were now as unceasing as those of Her Royal namesake to stay the voice of calumny; and though her nervousness was hard to overcome, and caused her occasional failures, she gained another triumph in 1780 in one of Grétry's operas, and again in 1782 in operas by Gossec and by Edelmann. "Never," says a contemporary, "had the expression of tenderness and passion been so exquisitely delineated on the French stage."

From this time her conquest of the public was complete, and culminated in that wonderful scene at Marseilles which we have already noticed.

Six years before the outbreak of the Revolution, Madame St. Huberty achieved one of her greatest triumphs as Didon in the opera of that name by Marmontel and Piccini. During the rehearsals, some persons remarked to the composer that they feared for the success of the opera, upon which Piccini replied, "Gentlemen, pray do not judge 'Didon' till Didon appears;" and indeed when Madame St. Huberty performed that character, the success was so great that Louis XVI., who did not care much for any opera, had it represented twice at Fontainebleau. More than this, he awarded to the talented singer an annual pension of 1,500 francs, adding 500 more from his own purse. This is one of the many similar acts of kindness on the part of the King that history has preserved—besides those of which no accurate record has been kept, presumed, on very good grounds, to have been still more numerous.

From this time till 1790, when she retired from the stage to marry a diplomatist, the Count d'Entraigues, Madame St. Huberty's career was one continual sucess; but we lose sight of her from 1786, when she sang for thirty successive nights in Glück's "Alceste,"

till 1790; that is, during the first years of trouble. In the Reign of Terror, which extended some years further on, the theatres were closed and several actors and actresses imprisoned, who were only released in 1795.

The Count had served in the French Army, and was formerly a member of the Constituent Assembly. He had known the charming *cantatrice* for some time, and on the 29th December, 1790, was married to her; but the marriage was kept secret for seven years afterwards. What was she doing during all those years of murderous strife in Paris? where did she reside from 1787 to 1790? History is silent. No one knows what horrors she may have witnessed, what anxieties and hardships she may have undergone. Her lover, or husband, was a diplomatist and a nobleman, therefore his life was not safe for a moment. In 1790, after their marriage, he emigrated—none too soon. He went first to Lausanne, where his wife joined him; soon afterwards he was appointed secretary to the French Embassy at Madrid, and, later still, to that of St. Petersburg. One day, on his way to Vienna, he was arrested at Trieste, his papers were seized and, forced from his devoted wife,

he was thrown into prison in the Citadel of Milan, on a charge of connivance in the intrigues of Pichegru. His wife managed to procure his escape, and he then (in 1797) made public his marriage for the first time.

The end of Madame St. Huberty—or rather, Madame la Comtesse d'Entraigues—was tragical, like that of her illustrious contemporary, Queen Marie Antoinette—though Antoinette the singer did not die by the blade of the guillotine.

The Count, after his escape from Milan, entered the political service of Russia. He was entrusted with secret missions, which brought him in large sums of money, both from the Court of St. Petersburg and from the English Government, under the Ministry of Canning. The Count and Countess d'Entraigues finally came to reside in England, at Barn Elms, on the Thames near Putney. They were on very intimate terms with many members of the Government. This attracted the attention of some of Fouché's agents, and one of them bribed a Piedmontese valet of the Count, named Lorenzo, to purloin some important dispatches, which were entrusted to him, and forward them to Paris. The theft was discovered almost immediately, and Lorenzo was

so grieved at having betrayed such a kind master, that he completely lost his head. In a fit of insanity he stabbed the Count as he was coming down stairs on the morning of the 22nd July, 1812, and meeting the Countess as he rushed upstairs he stabbed her also. He then shot himself. All three died. Thus ended the days of one of the most delightful of French singers, and a most praiseworthy character. Before leaving the operatic stage she helped many of her fellow artistes in the kindest manner; more especially the eccentric Mademoiselle Maillard, who became notorious for having, in man's attire, fought two duels with the same officer, and beaten him each time, and the charming Madame St. Aubin, who became part proprietress of the Opéra Comique just as the Revolution began, and for the next ten years lived a life of distress and anxiety. Thanks to "Madame la Ressource," both these singers rose into high repute, and have left behind them names that will be long remembered in the French Operatic world.

XXI.

THE ASSIGNATS.

THE most extraordinary revelations occur in the financial history of the paper-money issued in France during the latter part of the reign of Louis XVI. No one, however gifted his imagination, could realize the extraordinary rascalities of all kinds that the *Assignats* gave rise to. Twenty milliards of francs were floating about the country in the form of paper-money; and speculators, bill-discounters, swindlers of every description, were working hard, day and night, to make their illegitimate profits in a thousand different ways.

It is especially in the records of the numerous law-suits which arose out of this, that some interesting episodes connected with the enor-

mous issue of Assignats during the Revolution, come to light.

Among other curiosities worthy of note, we may mention the following: not only was France flooded by paper-money of its own issuing, but a manufactory was hard at work in Germany producing imitations of it to an unknown amount, and the artificial fraudulent assignats, so manufactured, kept finding their way across the frontier by millions. This was one of the methods by which Germany carried on the war against the Republic!

Then there was a rabble of speculators known as "the Black Band" (*la Bande Noire*) who engaged in the most iniquitous business. Among other things they bought up properties confiscated by the Government; they dealt in the châteaux and country residences of the nobility and gentry exiled, emigrated or murdered, which the revolutionary authorities sold at the most ridiculous prices, well knowing that the purchasers would destroy these old mansions and castles, these "bastions de la féodalité" if not by fire, at least by demolishing most of them. The same thing occurred to a great number of fine old

churches in the provinces, and numerous venerable monuments of gothic architecture which were destroyed by these Vandals.

The rise in the value of goods, coupled with the rapid depreciation of the paper that had purchased them, was the means of fortune on the one hand and ruin on the other, such as are only to be found in this period of history.

At the moment of writing, we have before us the case of a property in Normandy—and it would not be difficult for us to cite several similar cases—which was acquired for a sum that scarcely exceeded one year's income from the property itself. The estate in question was purchased in 1790, for the sum of 1,100,000 or 1,200,000 francs, and it brought in at that time 40,000 francs a year. At the period at which the purchase was made it was mortgaged by the buyer up to the last penny. About two or three years later, when the paper-money represented only the one-twentieth part of its nominal value, the owner of the property hastened to pay the mortgagees in assignats, which they were compelled by law to accept. A prolonged law-suit was the result, but nothing came of it. The

buyer of the property really got it for little more than one year's rent-produce, and the mortgagees were more or less ruined.

The same year that this extraordinary transaction terminated, a gentleman named Cerfbéer fell ill. He was a rich man, and the elder member of a very good family. The illness taking a serious turn, three medical men were called in consultation. For six months these three practitioners attended the invalid most assiduously, and finally restored him to health.

It was agreed at their last visit that they should each receive for their attendance the magnificent sum of 150,000 francs in assignats, representing about 12,500 francs in coin for each physician. This enormous sum, so generously offered by the patient, was accepted with the warmest expressions of thanks, and receipts in due form given for it by each of the three physicians. Two of them took the paper to a money-changer in the Palais Royal and each received in exchange for it the sum in coin we have mentioned. The third, however, believing that the assignats would rise in value, decided upon keeping his 150,000 francs of paper, which he did, until the conversion of the assignats into "mandats," or treasury-

orders, opened his eyes. He then actually had the stupidity to bring an action against his former generous patient, to compel him to pay the 12,500 francs in coin, and to receive in exchange the depreciated assignats he had received from him in the first instance, and for which he had given a receipt. Of course, he lost the action.

There was about the same time in Paris a man who called himself the Count de Balck, whose history is most singular. Gossips said he was no Count at all, and whilst he dilated upon his ancient pedigree, they assured everyone that he was the son of a labourer on a vineyard in the Côte d'Or. Far from being born a nobleman, they said, he had received a little education from the charitable old Curé of his village, and had thus been enabled to get himself admitted into the service of a rich nobleman of that district, in the capacity of *valet-de-chambre*.

As the troubles of the Revolution progressed, it became more and more the fashion to emigrate. At last the mania took such dimensions that no person, considering himself a gentleman, could do otherwise than quit the country, setting aside the safety of such a

step. It was both safe and fashionable, so that at last the poor King was left almost entirely without support, an easy prey to the rabble of the streets!

The master of our *valet-de-chambre* was possessed of this mania for emigration. Having sold everything, he decided to depart and to take this man with him as his only attendant. One fine morning the horses were saddled, and the two riders wended their way through the wood which surrounded the forsaken château. The Count (the master) carried a riding-whip and a pair of horse-pistols; the valet had likewise a brace of pistols and a kind of portmanteau strapped in front of his saddle, in which the entire fortune of his master was contained. The exact sum which it represented it is impossible now to name, but there must have been considerably more than a million and a half of francs in assignats.

They rode on for several days, sleeping at night in secluded villages; until, one afternoon, they approached the frontiers of Savoy. As they did so, they perceived on the right of the road a station of Republican frontier guards, and it was deemed prudent to separate

and to gallop past them by the two different roads that branched off near the spot. It was argued that in this case the shots that might be fired at them would probably not hurt either. The master took the straight road and galloped out of sight, never drawing rein till he was well out of reach of the guns of the guard, and no shots were fired after him. As soon as he had disappeared, the servant turned his horse's head and galloped back along the road he had come, never stopping till he had penetrated again a considerable distance into the interior, and pulling up at a dilapidated cottage, where he passed the night. Some say it was fright: that he was afraid of the risk of being shot at, and forgot that he carried anything of importance to his master. What became of the latter we do not know.

The valet, by degrees, got nearer again to his native place, no one appears to have hindered his journey. Being a man of low birth, no persons questioned him as they might have done had he been an aristocrat. At one of the last places on the road where he happened to lodge, he thought he would see what was in the portmanteau strapped upon

his saddle; so he broke it open in the inn, and, having ascertained the nature of its contents, decided not to return home, but to ride on to Paris. It was a long, tedious and anxious ride, no doubt, and more than once he feared the loss of the treasure.

Suddenly he appeared at Paris with the title of Count de Balck, gave himself out as a Russian nobleman, and caused some admiration by the fluency with which he spoke French—though it was, even then, well known that the Russians have peculiar facility in acquiring the pure French accent. He was thirty-two to thirty-five years of age, by no means a bad looking fellow, but the habits of the *valet-de-chambre* clung to him, so that several persons declared that he was some apothecary's assistant who had made his fortune by a quack medicine.

In order to induce people to believe that he was really a nobleman, he purchased or rented, one of the finest houses in Paris, the hotel formerly inhabited by Prince Salm-Kisbourg, situated on the Quai d'Orsay, and there he entertained guests of all descriptions, morning, noon, and night. In fact, he kept open house. Some of the best music was to be heard there, and some of the prettiest women graced his saloons.

Things went on wonderfully well for a year or two, but suddenly our valet-Count got into debt, and to extricate himself from the difficulties of his position, was obliged to consult a learned lawyer, from whose memoirs these details are gleaned. It was then discovered that this low-born menial had never learnt how to invest money, but had been living all this time on his ill-gotten capital. When he saw things in this novel light, he ran away and was never heard of again.

Another somewhat less direct kind of robbery consisted in the negotiation of Government Bills on Provincial Boards; in which transactions bill-brokers, or discounters were in league with the authorities. A proprietor of such bills, who had received them in payment from the Ministry, wishing to realize upon them and not knowing where or how to do so, applied to some place in the Palais Royal where the cunning broker informed him firstly that it was doubtful whether the Country Board would ever pay—that they had no money, all the taxes being spent before they were collected, &c., but that if the client would leave the numbers of the bills and call in a day or two, he would see what could be done.

In the meantime the broker ascertained through the authorities in the Treasury the exact value of the bonds in coin, the date at which they would be liquidated, &c., and then offered his client in assignats about one half the sum which the said bills were certain to realise.

In 1793 the French Rentes, which correspond to our Funds, were so low in value that seven francs invested therein brought in five francs a year, or, in our money, each £100 yielded £71 per annum. It was an investment bringing in no less than seventy-one per cent! But only the most audacious speculators risked their money in such doubtful securities. No ordinary person had enough confidence in the Republican Government. People who invested some thousands of pounds in Rentes at this time, realised a few years later considerable incomes; for, when the Government consolidated the debt, and paid off two-thirds of it in "mandats," still this investment brought in about twenty-five per cent upon the capital employed.

Many French writers agree that, in spite of all their drawbacks and the infamous transactions to which they naturally gave rise, the issue of Assignats did a great amount of good to the country. They enabled the Republicans to carry

on the war; they contributed powerfully towards the progress of French industry; they fostered enterprise in the industrial arts and manufactures, which could never have been managed otherwise; and, then, when coin returned to the country, manufactories, forges, mills, &c., were found ready developed. It was the Assignats that enabled the town of Paris to melt up the bells of the churches, and convert them into cannon and copper money. A tolerably full account of this paper-money, and its effects upon society in general, is to be seen in Thiers' "History of the French Revolution."

On the 19th of February, 1796, when the engraving plate of the Assignats was broken, there had been issued 45,500,000,000 francs, or £1,820,000,000 sterling of them.

XXII.

ASSASSINATION OF GUSTAVUS III.

WE did not intend in this series of sketches to wander at all beyond French territory, but there is one case in which we might be fairly allowed to make an exception. The assassination of Gustavus III., King of Sweden, which occurred on the 16th of March 1792, produced a terrible effect upon all that then remained of the French Court in Paris, where he was formerly so well known. The Marquis de Bouillé has left us a detailed account of it in his "Memoirs," though his style is not always so clear or explicit as it might be.

In 1771 the King—then Prince Royal—visited France under the *incognito* of Count de Haga, a title taken from the name of the Château near

Stockholm. He was liked exceedingly by all with whom he came in contact. It was during this stay in Paris that he received the news of the death of his father, Adolphus Frederick, and his call to the throne of Sweden. He wrote at once to the Swedish Senate, proclaiming his attachment to the laws of his country. The year following, 1772, he swore in the midst of the Diet that he would respect the state privileges, and public liberty, and that he would govern his people with equity. But six months had scarcely elapsed before, calculating on the support of his troops, he overthrew the Constitution, complaining that a "factious opposition," which existed in the Diet itself, obliged him to defend his rights and those of the nation. He surrounded the Senate-house with soldiers and violently dispersed the Assembly.

This violation of his oath and of the law of the country gave encouragement to the intrigues of the Court of St. Petersburg, which ended in Gustavus III. declaring war with Russia, a war which lasted from 1787 to 1790. He was compelled, however, to call together a new diet at Géfle, to obtain subsidies; and, on this occasion, although the deputies were chosen under his influence, they showed stronger opposition than he had ex-

pected. The King therefore contented himself with a portion only of the sums necessary to supply the urgent wants of the State, and dismissed the Assembly. Tranquillity reigned, to all appearance, at Stockholm, but the discontented nobles plotted a conspiracy.

At the time of the sittings of the Diet at Géfle the conspirators had made several futile attempts to fulfil their designs. Fate, more than the vigilance of the King, appears to have saved him upon this occasion. After his return to Stockholm, three of the principal conspirators took up their abode near the above mentioned country residence of Haga, situated about three miles from the city, where Gustavus usually passed a portion of the winter months, accompanied by very few courtiers and guards. One evening, about five o'clock, they approached the château in the dusk, and lay hidden near the King's apartment, which was on the ground floor. They were armed with carbines, and were all ready to murder him, when His Majesty, having returned that day from a long walk, thoroughly exhausted by the exercise, entered his library in his dressing-gown, threw himself into an arm-chair, and went off to sleep at once,

just in front of the library windows, which gave entrance into the garden.

Through these windows the would-be assassins saw all this, and were convinced that the King had suddenly died of a fit of apoplexy. They left the place at once with this belief, and without taking any steps to assure themselves of the reality. They ended by renouncing the project, for their courage failed them this time as it did on other occasions.

It was under the shelter of a mask only that they eventually dared to carry out their fiendish purpose; and even then had the conspirators on the night of the occurrence missed their victim, it is exceedingly probable that they would have given up the project altogether, for they were thoroughly weary of all the schemes they had elaborated during the past six months. The fatal moment, as the Marquis de Bouillé tells us, had not yet arrived; it was reserved for the night of the 16-17th of March, 1792, at the *Bal Masqué* given at the Opera, where the King was expected.

His Majesty, while supping with a few persons of his household before proceeding to the ball, received an anonymous letter, written in French, in which he was implored not to carry out his

intentions, intimating that if he went to the ball he would be assassinated. The statement was plain enough in all conscience. The writer of the letter said that he was neither an admirer nor an approver of the politics and morals of the King, but as a loyal man, he considered it his duty to warn His Majesty. He warned him, indeed, most particularly, in case he persisted in carrying out his original intention to take care of himself in the ball-room the moment he should be at all pressed by the crowd, as that was to be the signal for taking his life. The letter also told him in unmistakable terms to avoid most carefully the ground-floor in the Château of Haga.

This letter was written by Lilienhorn, one of the conspirators, and it is impossible to discover his motive for writing it. Whether his conscience tempted him to save the life of the King (to whom he owed everything in the world) without denouncing his associates, or whether knowing the courageous character of Gustavus, he was induced to send this anonymous missive with the view of inciting the monarch's courage, and so making sure of his presence at the ball—will ever remain a matter of opinion, but the

fact is that the warning only produced the latter effect.

The King showed the epistle to two or three persons who were taking supper with him; joked about it, laughed at it, and in spite of the most pressing representations on their part to forego the evening's amusement, he decided on appearing at the ball, and entered the large room with the utmost assurance, arm-in-arm with Baron Essen, his chief equerry. But His Majesty had scarcely made two turns round the ball-room before the crowd, just as the letter had announced, pressed about him very thickly. The assassins approached him from behind, at the opposite side to that on which his equerry walked, and discharged a pistol loaded with slugs. He received the shot in the left side, just above the hip. The crowd dispersed in an instant. The room was filled with smoke by the discharge of the firearm, and several voices shouted out "Fire! fire!" which, of course, increased the confusion.

It appears that at the very moment at which the pistol was discharged, the King must have made a movement which saved his life for the time, otherwise he must have

fallen dead on the spot. As it was he fell upon a bench, gave orders for the doors to be closed, and for all the persons present to take off their masks. The wounded Sovereign was then conducted to an apartment in the Opera House, without the conspirators taking any step to assure themselves of the success of their diabolical plot. There were, nevertheless, at this moment, no less than nine of them around him, who with a little more courage might have completed their murderous intentions.

At this critical moment, Gustavus received several Foreign Ministers and gave many proofs of great courage and generosity. Having inquired whether the assassin had been arrested, and being informed that he had not yet been detected, he exclaimed: "Pray God they may not be able to find him!"

However, the ruffian had dropped the pistols as soon as he had committed the crime. A person of the King's household had picked up one of them, and also a knife, just like that which the infamous Ravaillac used to assassinate Henri IV. The officers of the guards having caused all the doors to be closed, four persons only had managed to get away. Of

these, two were conspirators, both distinguished members of the nobility. As they passed the doors, every person was obliged to take off his mask and give his name; and the assassin himself, who passed out last of all, said, with the utmost impudence to the Lieutenant of Police, "As for me, Sir, I hope you do not suspect me!" The Lieutenant stared hard at him, and then let him pass without saying a word.

Whether we must attribute it to the cold nature of the Swedish people, which, according to De Bouillé, would be due to the northern climate, or whether it must be put down to consternation or indifference, the fact remains that little or no sensation was created by this awful occurrence, neither during the night, nor the following morning. The event was not noised about as might have been expected, and this shows what the conspirators might have achieved if they had possessed any courage at all. But in their plan, the King was to have fallen dead on the spot, and having missed their aim in this respect, though his life was not spared, the State was doubtless saved from a convulsion, the dangers and misfortunes of which

would have been incalculable. The wounded King at once nominated a Council of Regency, at the head of which he placed his brother, the Duke of Sudermania, in order that the affairs of State should not suffer by his illness, and he would not hear of the culprits being sought for.

The day after this deplorable event, the weapons of the assassin having been traced by the name of the armourer upon them, the latter pointed out the person to whom he had sold them; a man named Ankastroëm, who was an officer in the Guards. He was arrested in his own house, to which he had returned after the ball, and had not taken the least precautions to avoid capture, or made the slightest attempt to escape. He admitted at once that the pistols belonged to him, and that he was the author of the attempted assassination. He stated, moreover, that it was the desire to revenge himself on account of an unjust verdict pronounced against him, (although the King had pardoned him when the accusation was brought against him) and that disgust of life, had tempted him to execute this project, which he had long meditated, and by which he hoped to

receive a great recompense "from the nation," (he said, in the first instance, "from the opposition.") However that might be, he believed that in dying for his crime, he would be rendering a great service to his country. He was, therefore, a fanatic of the purest type.

At first Ankastroëm denied the existence of any plot, and gave his answers with great firmness and assurance. But a few days afterwards he confessed everything, not only the plan of the conspirators, but the names of the principal accomplices and the price he was offered to commit the crime—48,000 rixdollars. He asserted that the plot had been brewing since October of the previous year, that two attempts to carry it out in Stockholm had failed, and also one at Géfle.

The following was the line of action contemplated: The King being killed, it was proposed to murder at once all the principal supporters of the throne, the Barons Taube and Armefeld, friends of the King; the Count de Ruth, Grand Marshal of the last Diet; Count Wachmeister, the Chancellor, together with the Commandant of the City and the

chief officers of the garrison at Stockholm; to carry their heads about on pikes "in the French fashion," and with the assistance of the artillery of a regiment of the Blue Guards, and that of the Queen, of which they appeared to be quite sure, to constrain the people to adopt their cause; to deprive the King's brother, the Duke of Sudermania, of his liberty, if not of his life; and finally to become masters of the person of the young King, and compel him to sign and proclaim a new constitution based upon the principles to be laid down by the conspirators.

The author of the anonymous letter was arrested the same day as the fanatic Ankastroëm. He was taken just as he was leaving the apartments of the King, where he had passed a great portion of the day. This person, Lilienhorn, was a Major of the Blue Guards, a man who had been fed, dressed, educated, and drawn from misery and obscurity by the King, who covered him with favours up to the last moment. He confessed before the authorities, some days later, that he had had a hand in the plot; that he had been seduced into this abominable conduct by the hopes of having the command of the "National Guard"

of Stockholm given to him "after the revolution," as Monsieur de Lafayette had in France.

So the fearful seeds of the French Revolution were already germinating in foreign countries, almost before they had ripened in the midst of bloody atrocities in France. But there was this extraordinary difference in the present case: In France, *the people* assassinated the Court and the King; in Sweden, the assassination emanated from *the aristocracy*. "It was the crime of the nobility of the kingdom, humbled by Gustavus in the last Revolution of Sweden," says Thiers. "Thus the aristocracy who inveighed against this revolutionary fury of the people in France were presented with an example of what they themselves had formerly been, and still were, in countries less civilised than their own."

After thirteen days of dreadful suffering the courageous King, Gustavus III., died from the effects of the wound.

XXIII.

THE BRIGANDS OF ORGÈRES.

A PERFECT picture of France and French society during the time of the Great Revolution it would be an exceedingly difficult task to draw, but there is one thing which, however imperfect the delineation, would strike the most casual observer; the immense amount of misery of every description with which every quarter of that beautiful country was afflicted. In the dark heavy atmospheres of the cities and towns, murder, pillage and famine were rampant; in the pure air of the country was the rising of La Vendée with its murderous warfare; in the picturesque frontier provinces, invasions of foreign troops—carnage, pillage, desolation and starvation, everywhere!

Even the remotest tracts of country, those somewhat removed from the various revolutionary

centres, were infested with brigands. Nothing is more remarkable than the history of the Brigands of Orgères, or "Les Chauffeurs," as they were called, who were brought to justice at Chartres, and supplied the public of that old town with the spectacle of a most extraordinary criminal proceeding, the accused numbering no less than one hundred and ten persons, who appeared in the dock altogether. It was in the midst of the Revolution that these fellows were put upon their trial. In order to have them all placed before the jury, the large church in the centre of the town was converted, for the time, into a court-house. Each successive morning the culprits were taken from the prison, and conducted thither in a long column strongly guarded by mounted gendarmes, and foot soldiers. At the head of the column walked a red-haired man, powerfully built and of repulsive aspect. He was the avowed chief of the band, and it had been necessary to bring him out of the hulks at Brest, in order to place him with his wretched associates before the judges. Beyond the dock, in the aisle of the church, were placed numerous victims who had escaped with their lives, and now appeared against these wretches.

The account of the extraordinary manner in

which these brigands of Orgères were captured is certainly one of the greatest curiosities of the period. We will condense their history as much as possible.

There exists about thirty-five miles from Chartres, towards that district known as "Le Vendomois," a vast forest of great antiquity still called by its ancient name of Forêt d'Orgères. In one of the thickest depths of this forest some limestone quarries had been worked in former ages; they were of vast dimensions, and supplied an enormous amount of building stone, notably that with which the fine Cathedral of Chartres was constructed.

In course of time, sundry thieves and vagrants began to make use of these deserted old quarries, in order to hide from justice, and escape pursuit; and after a while a complete colony of outcasts of the worst description was thus formed and took up their abode there. For many years this state of things existed, and the colony of brigands, consisting of men, women, and children, amounted to a considerable number. First of all the wives of the men were admitted, and then laws were laid down and strictly adhered to by the whole gang, under pain of death. It had its chief, or governor, its police, and a set of rules

adapted to the dreadful profession they followed. Their plan was to rob systematically, and in separate bands. They had orders from the chief to commit these robberies at any cost, that is, by force, if necessary, by the use of torture, or even by means of murder. They had agents dispersed through several provinces, watching the isolated mansions and farms, taking note of those which were the easiest to plunder, and then giving notice to the band. The chief and a few of his more intimate associates held council in the caverns, and delegated a certain number of men to go and secure the booty.

They usually went to work in the most insidious manner; gaining admittance in the evening to some secluded farmhouse indicated by the agent, and obtaining entrance, or even hospitality, by means of various well calculated pretexts. After securing all the farm servants by means of ropes, or otherwise, they threatened the proprietor and his wife with instant death, unless they delivered up to them all they possessed. The torture made use of on these occasions to obtain from their victims any hidden treasure, was by lighting a large fire, and holding to it the feet of the poor creatures until they confessed what they, or their husbands possessed, for it

was principally the women who were subjected to this frightful treatment. From this circumstance the brigands were known all over the country as the band of *Les Chauffeurs*, and dreaded immensely by the entire peasant population. Although a few had been captured from time to time by the police and sent to the galleys, yet the number of cases of housebreaking, robbery and murder was as great as before, the band seemed to be as numerous as ever, no one could guess whence these villains emanated, and not one of those taken could have the fact of his having had recourse to torture brought home to him. There was no evidence sufficiently strong to convict any one of these of being a *Chauffeur*, though the suspicions were often very strong. As to the great cavern in the forest, the deserted quarries of which we have spoken, nobody appears to have heard of its existence; the most acute police officer had no idea where the stolen property went. The fact is, that after the booty was brought to the cave, it was only sold off in small lots at a time in various village fairs, many miles from the place where it was stolen, and still further from the forest of Orgères; so that it was almost impossible to trace anything, or to recognise the stolen goods when offered.

The impenetrable mystery surrounding the head-quarters of this band of brigands was at length solved by the most singular accident.

One morning early, two gendarmes were riding along the outskirts of the forest when one of them perceived—in this desolate district, many miles from any inhabited place—a little child, a boy scarcely eight years of age. He at once called his companion's attention to this curious fact. Their surprise was great, the more so, as the child's dress struck them as being most extraordinary. One of them got off his horse, went a little way into the wood and beckoned to him. The lad approached, for he was hungry, and immediately asked them for something to eat. They told him that if he would go along with them, he should have a good breakfast, and he soon consented to do so. One of the gendarmes then placed the child before him on the saddle, and they rode off with him, never drawing rein till they arrived at the nearest village. There they entered the inn, and ordered a breakfast for the half-starved urchin.

Whilst the little fellow eat, they observed him closely, and were not very long in remarking that he put everything into his pockets that happened to be within his reach. Tea-spoons, a fork, a cork-

screw, and various other small articles were made away with in this manner, whilst the boy was devouring his breakfast, and he did this without appearing to have the least notion that he was doing wrong. Upon being asked why he took these things, he merely replied that he liked them, they pleased him, or something to that effect. No other reason could be extracted from him, nor could he be made to understand that there was any harm in what he had done—his father, so he said, brought home things like those to his mother almost every day, and she never scolded him.

After the surprise, which this conduct excited, had somewhat abated, the gendarmes came to the conclusion that this lad must be the child of some professional thieves who had brought him up in the forest. When the little urchin had had a glass or two of wine he became very loquacious, and told his hosts that he lived "in a great cavern" under the ground, in the forest, with a great lot of people, besides his father and mother; that he had a number of little companions there about his own age, some of whom had bullied him and teased him so, that he had determined to run away, more especially as his father and mother had got very cross, and did not give him

everything he wanted either to eat or to play with.

It was imagined that by taking charge of this child of the forest, the public authorities might eventually succeed in tracing, through him, some of the vagabonds who were said to live in the great subterranean cavern that they had just heard of for the first time. They told the boy that as long as he remained with them he should have plenty to eat, and lots of things to play with, if he would promise not to take anything but what they gave him, and if he would point out to them, without saying a word, any of the people of the cavern that he might happen to recognise. They also promised him a small sum of money for every person that he was able to recognise in this way. The lad seemed to be quite content with the bargain. He was then washed, carefully combed, and dressed in a new suit of clothes, so that it would have been quite impossible for his own parents to have known him. Thus disguised, the police officers took him with them to various markets and fairs in the neighbouring villages, and placing him beside a woman who passed as his nurse, gave him the opportunity of pointing out to them every individual he had seen in the forest.

In the course of a few days several arrests were made; and before many weeks had elapsed, a considerable number of thieves of the worst description were taken by means of these indications. These arrests went on steadily increasing. In the meantime, the child had been nicknamed "General Finfin." It is a singular circumstance that among the great number of individuals taken in this manner by the police, neither the father nor the mother of Finfin were to be found! Either they never left the cavern at all, or the child took good care not to point out his own father and mother.

Submitted to rigorous cross-questioning, confronted with victims who had been robbed and tortured, and who remembered the features of the scoundrels, taken with stolen objects in their possession, the criminals were one and all convicted, proved to belong to the dreadful band of *Les Chauffeurs*, and were all condemned to the hulks for life. A band of honest workmen from Chartres, under the superintendence of the police, proceeded to the Forêt d'Orgères, and bricked up the entrance to the old quarries.

XXIV.

LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH.

THE present generation is far too equitable to attribute to Louis XVI. the catastrophes that befel the monarchy from 1789 to 1792. In order to pronounce a fair verdict upon this subject a wide survey of French history must be made, and it is necessary to go back as far as the days of Francis I. and Henri IV., if not to Louis XI. But the Sovereign most accountable for the evils that fell upon his successors is, perhaps, Louis XIII. In striking a blow at the gentry and aristocracy of his kingdom, he believed, no doubt, that he was rendering the throne more secure, whereas he was really uprooting its very foundations.

Richelieu, aided by Anne of Austria, completed the work so unwisely begun, and, by crushing the independence of the French aristocracy, as distinguished from a mere courtier nobility, prepared the way for a monarch whose personal will was law. For, in spite of the extension given by Louis XIV. to the power and influence of France, in spite of the literary and scientific glory of his reign, his lavish expenditure and unquenchable thirst for glory, his vanity and profligacy, sowed the seeds of corruption and prepared the evils suffered by his successors. In his reign arose a courtier nobility of the most servile type; corruption and profligacy were rampant in the highest places, and he left a heritage encumbered with debt and difficulty.

The hateful and demoralizing reign of Louis XV., characterised by reckless debauchery and abominations of every kind, increased the noxious atmosphere of the Court, and when his grandson, Louis XVI., succeeded him in 1774, in his twentieth year, he may well have exclaimed: "O, mon Dieu, nous régnons trop jeunes. Mon Dieu, guidez-nous, protégez notre inexpérience!" Such, indeed, were the words that he uttered, falling upon his knees with

his youthful spouse, Marie Antoinette of Austria, then nineteen years of age, when the news came that the old King was dead.

No one will deny that Louis XVI. was not prepared for a throne, by a careful preparatory study of public business, but there never was a monarch that loved goodness for its own sake more than he did. This is proved by the writings he has left behind him, as well as by the whole course of his unfortunate career. He took the initiative in the greater portion of the measures of popular reform; he recalled the Parliament; he placed his confidence in Turgot and Necker; he called together the States-General; and there was not a work of beneficence in which he had not an active part. His intentions were the best, however irresolute and misguided he may have been, and he was uniformly governed by a sense of duty.

But for more than a century and a half before Louis XVI. came to the throne, the materials of dissatisfaction, of discord and of revolution had been gathering. Though he is acknowledged to have been "the most honest man of his kingdom," mere honesty was not enough to stay the irrepressible spirit of

resistance to authority which had been gaining so vastly in strength throughout the previous reigns.

A number of well authenticated anecdotes, not only corroborate the notion generally held that Louis XVI. was deficient in firmness and vigour, but that he was *weak from extreme kindness of heart*, and La Rochefoucauld truly says: "La faiblesse est le seul défaut qu'on ne saurait jamais corriger." At Rheims, in 1775, at the time of the coronation, he showed the utmost good-nature to the people in numerous instances. One day that it rained hard His Majesty could not walk, except in the covered gallery which extended from the episcopal palace to the cathedral, all access to which was forbidden to the public. It happened that a workman had crushed forward to see him and was rudely pushed back by one of the guards, perceiving which, the King ordered the man to be allowed in and gave him his hand to kiss.

One evening, at Versailles, an old officer who had vainly solicited the ministers for a pension on account of his long services, presented himself at the entrance of the supper hall, and attracted the King's attention in

spite of the remonstrances of the courtiers in attendance. "Sire!" he exclaimed several times in succession.

"What is it, sir?" said the King, surprised at being thus addressed at such a time and such a place.

"Sire!" continued the old soldier, "I am seventy years of age, I have served more than fifty years, and I am dying of starvation!"

"Have you a memorandum?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Give it to me." The King took it without saying anything. Next morning, one of the officers of the guard on duty was sent by the King to bring the old soldier to him. On being presented shortly afterwards, His Majesty said: "Sir, I have awarded you a pension of 1,500 francs from my privy purse, you can go and receive the first year's allowance which falls due this day."—(Correspondance secrète de la Cour, règne de Louis XVI.)

Madame Campan, the Queen's devoted companion, tells us that on the 19th October, 1789, thirteen days after fixing his residence in Paris, the King went with one or two

gentlemen to review a detachment of the National Guard, when a youthful crossing-sweeper, not recognising His Majesty, asked him for money. He addressed him as "Monsieur le Chevalier." The King gave him a five-franc piece. The lad astonished at so large a sum, exclaimed: "Oh, I can't change that—you must give me something to-morrow," and was handing back the coin, when one of the gentlemen said, "Keep it, my friend, that gentleman is not Monsieur le Chevalier, he is the *eldest* of the family." (Only the younger members of the nobility took the title of Chevalier.)

When the mob broke into the Tuileries on the 20th June, 1792, and the gentlemen who attended Louis XVI. in that anxious moment drew their swords to die for him, the King said, "All resistance is useless, there is only one thing to be done, open the doors and present ourselves calmly." He then ordered Edouard, the Swiss, to open them, and the mob rushed in. Imagining that the King would be hidden, the ruffians were dumbfounded on finding themselves suddenly in the presence of Royalty. Then they discussed whether they should kill him, or lead him to

the Assembly to be heard. A frightful scene ensued and lasted for four hours. When repeatedly told by the mob to sanction the decree against the clergy under pain of death or abdication, Louis replied each time: "I would rather renounce my crown than participate in such tyranny." Then they forced him to drink to the patriots, handing him a dirty bottle. "It is poisoned!" some one whispered. "Never mind," said the King, "then I shall die without giving the sanction;" and he drank without the slightest hesitation. A few moments afterwards a grenadier of the Guards said to him, "They only wanted to frighten Your Majesty." Taking the man's hand and placing it on his heart, the King said, "You feel how calm it is—one is always tranquil in doing one's duty."

On the fatal 10th of August, when a mere handful of determined and devoted men could have saved the Palace, and perhaps changed the course of events; but when the misguided and cowardly guards deserted by hundreds, it was about five o'clock in the morning that one of the officers entered the Cabinet du Conseil, where the Queen and Madame Elizabeth were: "This is your last day!" said the man, "the

people are the strongest—what bloodshed there will be!" "Sir," replied Marie Antoinette, "save the King, and save my children." She then ran to the room where the little Dauphin slept. On being awoke, the child exclaimed, "Maman, pourquoi feraient-ils du mal à papa? il est si bon . . . ." At six o'clock the King showed himself on the balcony, and afterwards descended into the garden. The roughs cried: "Down with the King—*vive la Nation!*" The latter cry struck him, and His Majesty exclaimed, "And I also will cry: '*Vive la Nation!*' its happiness has always been the first of my wishes;" and when passing among the guards, his good-natured face as tranquil as ever, he said. "Well, they are coming—what do they want? I will not separate myself from good citizens; their cause has always been my own."

When utterly forsaken and at the mercy of the murderous mob, the King finally overcame his repugnance (keenly participated in by Marie Antoinette) to take refuge in the Assembly. "Let us give, then, this last mark of our love for the people," he exclaimed, ordering the gates to be thrown open and all resistance to cease. In the goodness

of his heart he walked to meet his death-warrant!

A few days later, when Louis XVI. saw the rapidity with which the debates at the Assembly were carried on, and the multitude of decrees, he observed: "If all these decrees had not been prepared beforehand, I would have defied them to have made them in so short a time." And when the horrible state of Paris was described to him, he said, "Ah! the kingdom is lost, without any fault of mine, whatever may be said about it."

That the unfortunate monarch had some kind of presentiment of his tragical end appears probable from the careful manner in which he studied the career of Charles I. of England, long before things came to the dreadful crisis. He read the celebrated trial more than once, spoke of it often to his friends, and his constant efforts were devoted during the last three years of his reign, to avoid the faults which, in his opinion, were the cause of the loss of the English Sovereign. Frequently he cast his eyes upon the large picture by Vandyke, a full length portrait of Charles I., with his horse and groom in the background. This picture had been bought in the reign of

Louis XV. by the Countess du Barri for the sum of £800, and placed by her in a saloon where it was constantly before his eyes. This was during the Parliamentary quarrels, and it is said that Madame du Barri, in showing the portrait to Louis XV., told him that if he did not suppress the rebellion of the Parliamentarians, they would treat him as the English Parliament had treated Charles I.

"Charles I.," said Louis XVI. "had many more friends than we have, and more constant friends; he perished—what can we expect . . . ?"

How true, and how characteristic were the last words the King ever pronounced! "Français, je meurs innocent—je pardonne à mes ennemis, et je souhaite que mon sang soit utile à la France, et qu'il apaise la colère de Dieu!"

According to Thiers the exact words were: "Frenchmen, I die innocent of the crimes imputed to me, I pardon the authors of my death, and I pray that my blood may not rest upon France." He would have continued, but the drums were ordered to beat, and drowned the voice of the King in their noise.

Some of the mistakes of Louis XVI. have

been charged to his excellent Queen, Marie Antoinette, but there is no foundation whatever for such an opinion. They both erred in many things, for they were but human; still it is impossible to attribute the errors of the one to the mistakes of the other. Her enemies accused her of being Austrian, and anti-national; but when in April, 1770, Marie Antoinette set out from Vienna, being then only fourteen and a half years old, to marry the Dauphin of France, she was already thoroughly French, "toute Française jusqu'au bout des ongles," as she says, playfully in one of her letters. Her early married life was radiant with hope; she dreaded no danger, for she felt no sin, though occasionally thoughtless, or even imprudent.

The correspondence of Marie Antoinette which has now been for many years before the world is a true reflection of her character, and shows to what an infamous degree she had been libelled and scandalized. It is proved, almost to demonstration, that the reputation of the Queen was never compromised either with the Count d'Artois, the Count de Fersen, or any other man of gallantry about the Court. That she may have been imprudent in attending mask balls, in acting plays, dispensing with ceremonies, and

showing attachments and dislikes, may be easily taken for granted, but between imprudence and dishonour, there is a wide interval !

The letters between the Empress Maria Theresa and her daughter, which were found in her private cabinet, extend from 1770 to 1780, and show how fondly she loved this child Antoinette, as she invariably calls her. She did not delude herself as to her intellectual capacity ; she did not imagine that her " darling Antoinette " possessed all those qualities that make a great independent sovereign, but she saw in her such attributes as might make her the fairest pledge of a happy alliance, fitted by her grace and tenderness to reconcile adverse parties, and by her beauty and wit to charm her husband into constant love ; whilst the purity of her life would spread a glow through the tainted atmosphere of the Court, and her courage and integrity fit her to be the mother of Kings.

The Empress knew her daughter, but not the people to whom she confided this precious jewel at the early age of fifteen ; nor did she know the weak good-natured Dauphin who was appointed to be her guide and support, and the governor of France.

Through the irresolution of Louis XVI. the

progress of the French Revolution, which was an evident necessity, and, under a wise direction, should have been a quiet sober proceeding to the achievement of constitutional liberty, became a mad, furious, diabolical revolt, with death and destruction for its object.

The Memoirs of Hue and those of Madame Campan are full of details pointing to the generosity of Marie Antoinette being equal to that of her Royal Consort. In many instances her charity is quite remarkable, though always unostentatious. When money was sent to the poor of Fontainebleau, she observed: "I hope this town will not be ungrateful, as others have been; the King and I had to plunge our hands deeply into our pockets to supply the money needed."

Maria Theresa feared that her daughter was rather too anxious to be altogether French; and in one of her letters upbraids her somewhat for neglecting her own countrymen. To this, Marie Antoinette replies as follows: "Je serais bien fâchée si les Allemands étaient mécontents de moi; j'avouerai que j'aurai parlé davantage à M. de Paar et au petit Starhemberg s'ils avaient meilleure réputation ici. J'ai pourtant, dans les temps des bals, fait venir M. de Lamberg et

Starhemberg, et d'abord que j'ai vu qu'ils dansaient, je les ai fait danser avec moi."

The Queen's amiable character is faithfully reflected in those few lines.

For the shocking details connected with the imprisonment of the King and his family in the Temple, we must consult that painful work: "A Journal of the Occurrences at the Temple during the Confinement of Louis XVI., King of France, by M. Cléry, the King's valet-de-chambre; translated from the original manuscript by R. C. Dallas, Esq. London 1798." The King's calm resignation and religious forbearance delineated in that book contrast most vividly with the harsh brutality of the heathen mob, in whose power he was. The most ardent imagination could not realize the daily insults and useless cruelties to which the unfortunate monarch and his family were subjected. Cléry must have written his journal with the tears streaming down his cheeks. Even in that dreadful last interview with his wife and children on the 2nd of January, the ruffians did everything that could be done to annoy them. At eight o'clock in the evening the King desired the municipal officers to conduct him to his family, from whom he had been separated since the 11th of December, occupying other rooms in

the dingy prison. They replied that it could not be, but that his family should be brought down if he desired it.

"Be it so," said the King, "but I may at least see them alone in my chamber."

"No," rejoined one of them, "we have settled with the Minister of Justice that it shall be in the eating-room."

"You have heard," said His Majesty, "that the decree of the Convention permits me to see them without witnesses."

"True," replied the officer, "you shall be in private; the door shall be shut; but we shall have our eyes upon you through the glass."

"Let my family come," said the King. We will not stay to describe this bitter scene.

The evening before, the King asked Malesherbes if he had not met a white lady near the Temple.

"No, Sire," he replied, astonished at the question.

"What!" rejoined the King, with a smile upon his countenance, "do you not know that, according to the popular superstition, when a prince of my house is about to die, a lady dressed in white wanders around the palace!" When the last hope of an appeal to the nation was hinted at,

the King shook his head, signifying that he expected nothing from it. His resignation and courage produced the greatest impression upon the venerable Malesherbes, perceiving which Louis XVI. said : " The Queen and my sister will show no less courage and resignation than myself ; *mourir est préférable à leur sort.*"

On Christmas day, 1792, in his dreary room in the tower of the Temple, Louis XVI. made his will ; it was during the time that the infamous trial was proceeding.

" I, Louis XVI. of France," writes the unfortunate monarch, " having been more than four months immured with my family in the tower of the Temple at Paris, by those who were my subjects, and deprived of all communications whatever, even with my family, since the 11th of this month, involved moreover in a trial the issue of which, from the passions of men, it is impossible to foresee, and for which there is neither pretence nor foundation in any existing law, having God only for the witness of my thoughts, do hereby declare in His Presence, my last will and the feelings of my heart."

Then follow certain devout religious sentiments, and declaration of faith, together with the following remarkable passage :

"I have never pretended to render myself a judge in the different modes of explaining the dogmas that divide the Church of Christ; but I have ever conformed, and will ever conform, if God grant me life, to the decisions which the superior Ecclesiastics of the Holy Catholic Church have made, and shall make, according to the discipline of the Church adopted from the time of Jesus Christ."

The passage concerning his son is still more remarkable, as exhibiting in the clearest light his own ideas of royalty and its duties:

"I recommend to my son, if he should have the misfortune of becoming King, to reflect that he ought to devote himself entirely to the happiness of his fellow-citizens; that he ought to forget all hatred and resentment, and particularly in what relates to the misfortunes and vexations I have suffered; that he cannot promote the happiness of a nation, but by reigning according to the laws; yet, at the same time, that a King cannot enforce those laws, and do the good which his heart prompts, unless he be possessed of the necessary authority; for, that otherwise, being fettered in his operations, and inspiring no respect, he is more hurtful than useful."

Another passage, the last we shall notice here, alludes to the ingratitude of those who had experienced nothing but the greatest kindness at his hands: "On the one hand, if I have been keenly wounded by the ingratitude and disloyalty of people who have experienced from me nothing but bounty; on the other I have had the consolation of seeing an attachment and concern manifested by many on whom I have never bestowed a favour." And with regard to the ferocious brutes who kept guard over His Majesty in the Temple, he writes: "I also most freely forgive those who were guards over me for the ill-treatment and constraint they thought it their duty to inflict upon me. Some there were whose souls were tender and compassionate; may their hearts enjoy that peace which should be the reward of such dispositions."

What forbearance and what goodness, if not greatness, are depicted in these few lines!

Among the thousands who perished needlessly in the Revolution, many great men, eminent in science, like Lavoisier, the chemist; or in literature, like André Chénier, the poet; many eminent ministers and statesmen followed the King and Queen to the guillotine. None were

more universally regretted, perhaps, than the distinguished artillery officer Chappuy de Maubart whose talent was known to the whole of Europe. He was offered his life if he would serve the Republic. "No!" he replied, "I have never fought, and never will fight, but for my God and my King!"

XXV.

A BANKER IN THE REVOLUTION.

ONE of the blackest names of the French Revolution is that of Héron. This fellow was formerly a merchant at Marseilles, where he became a fraudulent bankrupt, and absconded to the Southern States of America. As soon as the Revolution had broken out in France he returned, bringing with him a forged bill of exchange of the nominal value of some £6000 in English money, supposed to be drawn by the Spanish Government upon Havana. He went about with this bill to the largest banks in Paris, in the vain endeavour to get it discounted. The well known houses of Magon de la Balue, Lecouteulx and Co., and several others of less importance, were successively applied to, but they probably saw

through the roguery and would not advance a single *sou* upon the bond.

The immediate consequence of this affair was that these honourable bankers, one and all, were cited before the Revolutionary tribunal as conspirators. This was equivalent to condemning them to death "for conspiring against the Republic," and confiscating their goods at once.

The two partners, Lecouteulx were incarcerated at the prison of the Conciergerie for eleven consecutive months, and only escaped death in the most miraculous manner:—the 9th Thermidor (27th July, 1794) occurred before they could be sacrificed, they having, in the meantime, bribed one of the judges of the mock tribunal, by means of very heavy sums, to place their accusation papers every day underneath those of other victims, so that their case was postponed, thus, from day to day.

But of all these iniquitous cases, that of M. Magon de la Balue is without doubt one of the most interesting and the least generally known. For many years this estimable man had been a client of Berryer, the celebrated advocate, who tells us, in his *Souvenirs*,

in very plain words that the real and sole cause of his condemnation, and that of several members of his family, was that they had the reputation of being very wealthy. A handful of revolutionary ruffians had persuaded themselves that the residence of M. Magon de la Balue, in the Place Vendôme, was literally filled with gold. Their disappointment was converted into rage, when, on laying their greedy hands upon his papers and breaking into his safes, they discovered that he had about £75,000 in London in the Bank of England, and that the rest of his fortune, some similar amount, stated at £72,000, had been converted into *assignats* and was not to be found in his house.

Héron, the fraudulent bankrupt already mentioned, accused this worthy banker of "conspiring" with foreigners against the Republic, and this infamously absurd plea was backed up by a half-crazed Italian adventurer, who swore that the Austrian bank had remitted money to Paris for him, which had passed through the hands of the banker of the Place Vendôme. Although there was not a single word of truth in this, or, in fact, in any of the other accusations, M. de la Balue was

incarcerated, together with his daughter, Madame la Marquise de St. Perne, his elder brother, M. Magon de la Blinais, and his grand-children, Monsieur and Madame Cornulier. Nor was his private secretary, M. Coureur, forgotten by these villainous Communists; he was also implicated in the infamous indictment. At this time M. Magon de la Balue was considerably over seventy years of age, and his brother was in his eighty-fifth year.

As soon as Berryer heard of the misfortune which had thus suddenly smitten his worthy clients, he decided without hesitation to use every endeavour to get them liberated in the shortest possible delay. For this purpose he went directly to the house of Hérault de Séchelles, who was then President of the National Convention. This man was a nephew of Marshal Contades, whose sister M. Magon de la Balue had married; there was a kind of family tie, and Berryer naturally thought it would not be very difficult to induce this relative of M. Magon to sign a release for his venerable client at once. The more so as the lawyer had known him personally, having met him occasionally at M. Magon's

house, and had transacted legal business for him in former times.

Berryer describes the President of the Convention as a young man, not quite forty years of age, very tall and handsome, with all the manners and appearance of a gentleman, but a professed demagogue. It was with disgust and horror that he found him cold to his appeal on behalf of his aged clients. The paltry excuse alleged by Hérault de Séchelles was, that in his position as President of the Convention, he would compromise himself if he took any action with regard to a member of his own family. He could not, or would not, save him; but after every endeavour had been made by Berryer, one of the most gifted of French orators, to enlist his sympathies, and had failed, the cowardly President gave him two lines of introduction to his colleague, Dubarran, a member of the Committee of Public Safety, and a man from whom nothing resembling justice or generosity could be hoped.

The worthy barrister went at once to this hard-hearted Revolutionist, with, as he says, "more courage than hopes of success, for his abominable character was too well known

to me." He found him in the meeting-room of the said Committee, surrounded by his villainous colleagues, seated in an atmosphere as foul and pestilential as the minds of the men who were then deliberating on the lives of their superiors—well known men who stood before them calmly awaiting their dreadful fate, and appearing in the dim light of the unhealthy room more like spectres than human beings.

"I knew," says Berryer, "that the thirst for blood was ardent there, that there was complete absence of anything like compassion, and that the consciences of the grossest of cannibals alone dictated their decisions."

After waiting for some time, he procured an audience with the fellow Dubarran, and presented his letter of introduction. "What!" exclaimed the Member of the Committee, "*you* are then the man who takes upon himself to defend the enemies of the Republic! aristocrats! conspirators!" raising his harsh discordant voice as he pronounced each word; "take my word for it, you had better forget all about them and let us manage these affairs ourselves."

Berryer knew at once that his errand was

fruitless; he withdrew without attempting to plead his case to such a wretch.

One morning, shortly after this occurrence, as the lawyer was sitting in bitter silence, ruminating over the many disasters that had befallen so many of his excellent friends, a man of about forty years of age entered his room. He was well dressed, and had the outward appearance of an honest man; but Berryer did not know him at all.

"You are the counsel of M. Magon de la Balue," began the stranger, rather abruptly, "the banker who is confined with his brother in the Rue des Amandiers. I come to propose a method by which you can get them out of prison, and conduct them safely across the French frontier."

"Indeed!" said Berryer.

"They will only have to sacrifice a little money," continued the other, "and that will be easy enough for them to do. In the lining of the dressing-gown which he wears, M. Magon has concealed some £70,000 worth of *assignats*; they are sewn into the lining. He must give you £12,000 of this sum for me; you will bring it here, and, in exchange, I will deliver to you the three blank pass-

ports which I have the pleasure of showing you." And whilst he said this, the stranger brought out of his pocket three blank passports which he showed to the lawyer; they were all three properly signed by Members of the Committee of Public Safety—Robespierre, Couthon, Carnot and Barrère—and were sealed with the seal of the Republic.

"I have only shown you these," proceeded the unknown visitor, "in order that you may certify to M. Magon that you have seen them, and that my offer is *bonâ fide*. But if you value your own life, you will not mention their existence to any other person. Go at once to your clients; you will find that the prison doors will open to you when you mention your name. Do what you can to induce them to accept my terms; I will return here to-morrow at the same hour to learn the result of your negotiation."

Having vividly impressed upon M. Berryer the necessity of being extremely discreet in this matter, the stranger took his departure, and the worthy barrister, overwhelmed with astonishment, went that very evening to the prison in which his clients were confined. The instant he pronounced his name the doors

flew open, and in a few moments he found himself in the presence of the two brothers. When he related the object of his visit, the banker was deeply affected and nearly swooned on hearing that the hiding place of his assignats had been discovered, and that he must have been betrayed by some person with whom he was on terms of the greatest intimacy.

After recovering from his emotion, they all began to discuss the proposition as calmly as possible. Nothing, however, that Berryer could say, would induce either of them to concede to it. The existence of the blank passports was not denied, nor the possibility of filling them up with the names of his brother, his grandson and himself; "but," intimated M. Magon, "how do we know that these passports will guarantee our safe retreat? How do we know that these same brigands will not assassinate us on the road to get the rest of our money?" The brother, who in spite of his great age was a man of remarkably clear intellect, was of precisely the same opinion. If they accepted such a proposition, he thought, they would condemn themselves, whereas at present they had nothing to fear

at the hands of justice. . . . . Justice! what a term to use at such a time and amid such scenes!

In fact, all the lawyer's arguments were useless. The proposition was not accepted. But the worthy old banker profited by this interview to inform his counsel that he was very anxious to pay the wages of his servants, and a few other small debts which his sudden imprisonment had prevented him discharging; he therefore begged to have his butler sent to him the next day, that he might distribute the money owing, and these accounts, amounting to about £320, were thus paid, to the great relief of the old gentleman's anxiety.

Punctually at the hour named the unknown visitor of the day before made his appearance to ascertain the result of the interview. Making a polite bow, and seating himself opposite to the lawyer he said. "I know you have acquitted yourself of your mission. I understand that you saw M. Magon and his brother last night, and that you had a long consultation together. Well, what have they resolved upon?"

"I have found in these two men," replied Berryer, "two honourable, peaceful, irreproach-

able members of society, who have nothing to fear, at the hands of justice."

"Very well," interrupted the stranger, "in other terms, they refuse my offer? In this case they will not be long in meeting with the destiny that awaits them." Then rising hurriedly from his seat, he took two steps towards the lawyer and added: "Now, as to yourself, beware how you ever allude to this adventure, or seek to discover who I may be, for as sure as you make any attempt of this sort you will not be long in undergoing the fate that awaits your blind clients." And with these words he withdrew, a diabolical scowl playing around his coarse features.

Exactly one week later, M. Berryer entered a *café* in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, and was looking over the newspaper of the day, when his eyes met a paragraph which informed him that the Revolutionary tribunal had condemned to death "as conspirators" Magon de la Balue, Magon de la Blinais, the Marquise St. Perne, and Cornulier. As for the wife of the latter, her execution was postponed as she was on the point of becoming a mother. The poor young Secretary, M.

Coureur, was condemned also to die with the others.

The blade of the guillotine having done its bloody work, then came the eagerly awaited confiscation of the property of the victims. The grandchildren of M. de la Balue (the three young children of M. Cornulier) were turned out of their parent's house into the street, and left entirely to the mercies of a kind of charwoman, who had worked occasionally for the Marquise de St. Perne. Fortunately for them, this woman had imbibed from her unfortunate mistress a little of those feelings of kindness and generosity which characterised the latter. She voluntarily took charge of the children, actually sold her own clothes, and worked hard every day to support them. She continued to do so for many months, and at last Madame Cornulier was enabled to reward her for her generous conduct.

As for this unfortunate widow, Madame Cornulier, who saw the days of her husband and so many other members of her family suddenly cut short in this frightful manner, she was taken from the prison of the Conciergerie to a hospital for women, established near the Hôtel-Dieu. There lay six ladies whose husbands

had been executed, and who were in the same state as Madame Cornulier—among them the beautiful Duchesse de St. Aignan—and three others who pretended to be so, and thus had their lives saved by the outbreak of the 9th Thermidor, or were released by the pleading of M. Pons de Verdun, who had the courage to sue for the discharge of six of them before the Convention.

Berryer himself, to whom we owe the record of these terrible details, had also a narrow escape. When the papers of his unfortunate client, Magon de la Balue, were being over-hauled by a gang of ruffians, among whom the aforesaid Héron was conspicuous, a packet of the barrister's letters to the banker, which had been scrupulously preserved, fell into the hands of this atrocious character, who imagined he had made a very lucky find. Doubtless he thought that the legal adviser of the banker would be able to say what had become of all his property. But it happened that among the persons present was Pasté, a member of the police force who was known to be well accustomed to legal matters, and whose voice over-ruled Héron's on this particular occasion. Whether he knew the eminent

barrister by reputation, whether he wished to avoid the trouble of the search, or whether he simply desired to contradict the villain who would do anything for the chance of getting money, we do not know; but he simply remarked:—"What the deuce do you think those letters can teach us about the commercial speculations of his client? He only knows about the quarrels of the banker with his creditors or his tenants." So saying, and whilst the other's attention was attracted by something else, Pasté slipped the packet of letters into his pocket.

M. Berryer asserts that throughout his lengthened career he has always felt extremely indebted to this man Pasté, for the important service which he did him on this critical occasion. Indeed, had Héron got possession of the letters, the excellent lawyer would doubtless have been dragged to the guillotine, and the faithful details contained in his interesting "Souvenirs"—two small volumes now long out of print—would never have been given to the world.

But the days of reaction and vengeance were not far distant. It was not, as many suppose, that the revolutionists were tired of the sight of

blood. As long as there was a rich man to execute whose goods could be got hold of, the butchers would have continued their daily massacres. That which really brought about the reaction of the 9th Thermidor was the discord that broke out, and divided the National Convention into several hostile parties who preyed upon each other. Then it was that those unprincipled scoundrels who had sacrificed the lives, and stolen the properties of so many great and good men, were themselves placed under the blade of the guillotine, whose keen edge, for once, did work that was worthy of it. The wretched Héron was tried and executed within one week of the outbreak; for the most violent and ignorant now went first! The shouts that were raised when the head of Robespierre fell, were terribly indicative of the intensity of the reaction. He was executed on the 28th of July, 1794, having already caused the above mentioned Hérault de Séchelles, the tall handsome hard-hearted young President of the Convention, to be guillotined on the previous 5th of April. A batch of others fell at the same time, fellows who little thought how soon they would follow their victims to the dreaded scaffold!

XXVI.

DEATH OF THE PRINCESS DE LAMBALLE.

SCENES that were enacted in the prisons of Paris have been placed on record by Beaulieu, de Molleville, Madame Roland and others who kept notes and journals during the most dreadful period of the Revolution. They are far too atrocious to be related with any detail in these pages, the writers of the Memoirs themselves avoid allusion to many of them as too horrible to be written.

The *domiciliary visits*, kept filling the prisons with *suspected* persons—persons who were supposed to be anti-revolutionists. These were brought to a kind of mock trial, and executed for the most part. It did not matter who or what they were, all met with exactly the same treatment. Marat continued publishing, in his

infamous journal, that 300,000 heads must fall before the Revolution could be considered at all consolidated. The villainous Fouquier-Tainville, then all powerful, received no less than 80,000 francs from the hands of Madame de Rocheouart as a bribe to spare a certain gentleman named Morny who was accused of having emigrated. He took the money, the victim was executed, and the lady received a communication to the effect that "if she opened her mouth about the matter she would be imprisoned for life."

A few days before the horrible massacres of September, Danton had sent an assignat of about £100 nominal value, to the sexton of St. Sulpice, with instructions to prepare at once an enormous *fosse*, or excavation, at Montrouge, in order to bury the intended victims. And they were shortly afterwards brought there—ten cartloads of them!

According to De Molleville whose vivid Memoirs bear the impress of truth upon every page, Danton, Robespierre, Marat and Tallien, with a few other Communists, planned the September massacres, and saw that they were duly carried out. He was one of the prisoners who had the rare good fortune to escape in the middle of the carnage. The same authority says, some

three or four hundred bloodthirsty ruffians, principally chosen among the Marseillais, were the tools by which thousands of innocent folk of all kinds were murdered. According to Madame Roland, another prisoner, whose heroic existence ended later on the scaffold, there were only fifteen assassins at the Abbaye, and fifty armed men would have protected each prison with the greatest of ease; as to the general public it looked on in dismay and did nothing.

Of the hundred and eighty-four Ecclesiastics besieged by the mob in the convent of the Carmelites, one hundred and fifty were massacred, thirty-four managed to escape. At St. Firmain, eighty-four were killed and fifteen escaped. At Lyons, Nantes and other large towns, men, women and children, so called anti-revolutionists, were shot down, drowned systematically, or murdered in other ways by the revolutionary rabble, and in inconceivable numbers.

The comedians of the Théâtre Français were confined at the prison of the Madelonettes under the superintendence of a municipal guard, a comic fellow named Marino, evidently a southerner, who said he would send them a *fermier-général* to feed them! This same fellow held the following curious conversation with the

wealthy M. de Crosne who was confined in the same prison. Calling this gentleman forward he said : "Here, my son, you will take care of these persons," (alluding to some newly arrived prisoners, towards whom the municipal was well disposed), "I have sent to your house for some mattresses, as they have nothing but straw to sleep upon ; do you hear?"

"Oui, Citoyen."

"Sit down there."

"Oui, Citoyen."

"You will pay for their dinners?" continued the municipal, passing his filthy hand in a coaxing manner over the gentleman's cheek.

"Oui, Citoyen."

"And give them wine?"

"Oui, Citoyen."

"And potatoes, and *gigot à l'ail?*"

"Oui, Citoyen."

"That fellow Jusserand will keep the bill of fare and the expenses ; now, mind you don't forget!"

"Non, Citoyen."

And thus the comical dialogue ended, with an amicable slap on the face from the dirty municipal.

Beaulieu, from whom we have this little scene, tells us that among the prisoners at the Luxem-

bourg were two ladies of high rank, the Duchesse de Noailles, and the Duchesse d'Ayen. The first of these was about eighty-three years of age, quite deaf, and so weak that she could scarcely walk. At meal times she was obliged, like the others, to carry her own bottle and wooden plate to the common table, to get any food at all; and, as the prisoners were half starved, there was generally a crowd and a crush at this time in which the poor old Duchess got terribly pushed about. Being too weak to withstand such rough conduct, she only managed to keep her feet by dragging herself along the wall of the room, and never reached the table until everyone else was seated. Then the gaoler would take her rudely by the arm, twist her round, and push her upon the bench. One day, thinking that he said something, she looked up and asked: "Qu'est-ce que vous dites?"

"What do I say?" he replied, with a coarse expression, "I say that there is nobody here to dangle after you, stick yourself down there!" and so saying he placed the old Duchess upon the bench at table just as he would have put down a parcel.

The unfortunate Swiss Guards of the Tuileries, taken prisoners on the terrible 10th of August,

1792, were all massacred in cold blood. Then followed several well known magistrates, Thierry, the King's valet, and other persons attached to the Court. Thiers has given a concise and tolerably accurate account of the September murders in his "History of the French Revolution;" but he necessarily passes over many details both horrible and instructive. The system adopted by the assassins was to sit in council at one of the prisons, for instance at L'Abbaye, and have the prisoners led before them one by one. The judges of this mock tribunal were generally two Communists with scarves over their coats—"municipal guards" they were termed—and some ten to twenty fellows, more or less intoxicated and riotous, sat or stood around the little table at which the two municipals were seated. As a matter of form some sheets of paper, with a list of the prisoners' names, and a little bottle of ink together with a few pens that were never used, lay upon the table. Outside the gate, which led from this room into the courtyard or the street, stood the assassins in a double row, armed with sabres, pikes, and bludgeons. If it was at the Abbaye, the victim was led to death outside on the President exclaiming, "Conduct this

man to La Force!" or, if it was at La Force, the term used was, "Take him to the Abbaye!" he was then led out and massacred.

In a few remarkable instances a prisoner was allowed to go free; then the President made some other sign and the *sans-culottes* shouted "*Vive la Nation!*" Some of them insisted upon taking the liberated prisoner home to witness his reception by his family; after which they returned to their bloody work. Saturday, Sunday and Monday, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of September, 1792, the massacres continued in Paris, day and night, equalling in horrors all that was done on the same gigantic scale in the other French towns, and anything that we have on any previous occasion on record in history.

The beautiful Louise de Savoie, Princesse de Lamballe, was born at Turin on the 8th of September, 1749; she was a relation of the King of Sardinia. Very early in life she married the Prince de Lamballe, only son of the Duc de Penthièvre, a husband by no means worthy of her. However, he died at the age of twenty, she being then nineteen. When she was appointed *intendante* of the Royal Household of Marie Antoinette, she was already a

widow, young, handsome, wealthy and exceedingly amiable. On the flight of the King and his family from Paris, the Princess escaped by another road from France to England, where she might have lived in safety and happiness for the rest of her days; but when she heard of the capture of the Royal family at Varennes and their forced return to Paris, she determined, in spite of all entreaties, to share their captivity. On her arrival in August, 1792, she was astonished at the change that had occurred in the beautiful Marie Antoinette within the short period of a few weeks. "Her eyes were sunk deeply into their sockets, her hair was white, her spirits were broken, and sleep appeared to have forsaken her." As for the King, he appeared to be sinking into a state of lethargy. It was indeed a shocking spectacle to so devoted a friend as the Princess de Lamballe.

As soon as it was decided by the mob that the King and his family should be confined in the tower of the Temple, his Majesty chose M. de Chamilly, his first *valet-de-chambre*, to wait upon him, whilst M. Hue, usher of the King's chamber, was to wait upon the young Prince. The Princess de Lamballe, the Marchioness de Tourzel and

Mademoiselle Pauline de Tourzel, accompanied the Queen. Madame Thibault, Madame Bazire, Madame Navarre and Madame St. Brice, four of the ladies of the bedchamber, attended Her Majesty, the Prince and Princesses. Such was the state of things on the 13th following the 10th of August. But on the sixteenth day of the King's imprisonment it was learnt that every person who was in the Temple with the Royal family had been taken up in the night, examined before the Council of the Communists, and *had been all sent to the prison of La Force*, except M. Hue, who was taken back to the Temple to attend upon the King.

Pétion, the Mayor of Paris, afterwards granted Cléry's request to attend upon the young Prince, and he entered the Temple on the 26th of August. A few days later, M. Hue was again arrested and taken away, leaving the faithful valet Cléry as the sole attendant upon the Royal victims.

The deeds of blood which reached their height on the 3rd of September, 1792, were enacted at the prisons of Le Chatelet, La Force, L'Abbaye, La Conciergerie, the Bernardins, Saint Firmain, La Salpétrière, and Bicêtre. The disbursement book of the Communists is

still preserved. In this atrocious document, it is seen that the handful of wretches who massacred between six and ten thousand persons (the exact number could never be ascertained) received about 24 francs a piece, or 1,463 francs (about £58) in all. Efforts were made by some humane souls to save the victims, and a Committee from the Assembly managed to set at liberty a few women and debtors. But these attempts were mostly fruitless. The sufferers heard from their cells the frightful shrieks and tumult outside, and knew the fate that awaited them. In some instances the massacres outside the gates were witnessed by the prisoners from the little windows of their cells, and they studied the best positions to be adopted on meeting the sabres and bludgeons, in order to die as quickly and with as little pain as possible. It was observed that those who raised their arms in the air, to ward off the blows, died a more prolonged and wretched death than others who submitted themselves calmly to the assassins.

The Princess de Lamballe and her maid were confined at La Force. The above mentioned Committee had succeeded in extricating four and twenty women from that fearful place, and this was equivalent to condemning to certain death

all who remained. The unfortunate Louise de Savoie was among these, and the assassins hired to do the bloody work at this prison were even more atrocious characters, if possible, than those at L'Abbaye. At the Abbaye, the judges were chosen from among the executioners who were already, to a certain extent, tired and disgusted with their work, and with their small pay. But at La Force, the two scoundrels who sat in judgment were members of the Jacobin Club which had authorised and planned the massacres, and their tools were mere hired assassins. As to the proceedings, they were very similar in every case. The drunken Communists had no gift of imagination which might have enabled them to vary their questions a little. They asked the prisoners what they knew of the conspiracies of the Court, whether they swore to hate the King and Queen, &c., and then pronounced the words which were a signal for the unfortunate victims to be led out to slaughter.

When the beautiful and amiable Princess Louise was led before this horrible tribunal, she found herself surrounded by men whose frightful countenances, and clothes stained with blood, were enough to strike terror into the stoutest hearts. This awful sight and the shrieks of the

victims outside, caused her to faint away in the arms of her maid. She had scarcely recovered consciousness when another series of screams caused her to swoon again.

As soon as she was able to speak, one of the ruffians at the table demanded whether she knew anything about the conspiracies at Court on the 10th of August. "I am ignorant," she replied, "as to whether there were any conspiracies; but I know that I had no knowledge of any."

"Swear then," said the Communist, "swear liberty and equality—swear hatred to the King and Queen and to Royalty."

"I can easily swear the first," answered the Princess, "but I cannot swear the last, it is not in my heart to do so."

At this instant one of the fellows standing near whispered to her to swear at once, otherwise she was a dead woman. "Jurez donc!" said the man, "si vous ne jurez pas, vous êtes morte!"

This shows that even in that lowest and most disgusting of all society, the charms of the Princess de Lamballe had, in those few short moments captivated some of the drunken assassins; and this instinctive attempt to save her was made, probably, at no small risk to the

fellow who did it. However, she answered not, but raised her hands to her face and took a step backwards towards the door as if her nervous system had again given way. At this moment, the scoundrel who had questioned her pronounced the words: "Qu'on élargisse Madame!" signifying in reality, "Set Madame at liberty," (or at large), but they appear to have been the preconcerted formula for death. Two men rushed forward, seized her by the arms and dragged her out of the room. She had scarcely crossed the threshold before she received a heavy blow on the back of the head from a sword. The monsters who held her, led her on nevertheless, forcing her over mutilated corpses and through pools of blood towards the spot where she was to be dispatched. But by this time all vital power had left her, for she had swooned immediately, and she fell upon the ground, where the little remaining spark of life which may still have lingered in her beautiful frame was at once annihilated by stabbing her in the throat with pikes. The dead body was then stripped of its clothes, and lay exposed for two hours to the brutal outrages of the drunken populace. At about twelve o'clock they decided to cut off the head and to cut out the heart, a

cannon was loaded with one of the legs, and what remained of the corpse was dragged about the streets.

The head of the victim was stuck upon a pike and the heart upon the point of a sabre, and they were carried by the mob first to the Abbey of St. Antoine, where they were shown to the Lady Abbess, Madame de Beauvau, an old and intimate friend of the unfortunate Princess, after which the assassins carried them off in procession to the Temple, with the intention of showing them to the Queen, but this attempt was frustrated.

On the day that this terrible catastrophe occurred at the prison of La Force, the King, at the Temple, rose at his usual early hour, and as Cléry was dressing him he inquired if there were any news of M. Hue, or of the commotions in Paris. Cléry said that in the course of the night he had heard a municipal say that the people were going to the prisons, that he knew nothing more, but would endeavour to learn what was going on.

"Take care," said Louis XVI., "not to expose yourself, for we should then be left alone, and indeed I fear it is their intention to put strangers about us."

At eleven o'clock, just as the massacre of the Princess de Lamballe had been perpetrated at the prison, the King, having joined his family in the Queen's room, a municipal desired Cléry to go up to the King's chamber, where he found another, named Manuel. The latter asked him what the King had said of M. Hue's being taken away; and Cléry replied that it had made His Majesty very uneasy.

"He will come to no harm," said Manuel, "but I am ordered to inform the King that he will not return, and that the Council will put a person in his place, you may go and break this news to him."

Cléry begged to be excused, adding that the King wished to see him (Manuel) with regard to several things of which he was in urgent need. Manuel could scarcely prevail upon himself to go down to the room where the King was; however he did so, making known the order of the Communistic Council concerning M. Hue, and informed His Majesty that another person was to be sent.

"By no means," replied the King, "I will make use of my son's *valet-de-chambre*, and if the Council object to that, I will wait upon myself—I am resolved." He added that both he

and his family were in great want of linen and other clothing. Manuel said he would go and make it known to the Council, and retired. As he went out, Cléry asked him if the tumults continued, and his answer excited much apprehension that the populace might visit the Temple.

At one o'clock the King and his family expressed a desire to walk, but they were refused, as the previous day (Sunday) there had been great tumults around the Temple; and when the Royal Family walked in the garden, as usual, one of the municipals was overheard to say, "We did wrong in allowing them to walk this afternoon." They then went to dinner, and whilst dining heard drums, and soon afterwards shouts of the populace. The King rose from table with much uneasiness, and they all retired to the Queen's room. Cléry then went down to dine with Tison and his wife, the porters or doorkeepers of the Temple.

"We were scarcely seated," he says, "when a head upon the point of a pike was held to the window. Tison's wife gave a violent scream, which the murderers supposed to have proceeded from the Queen, and we heard the savages laughing immoderately. Imagining

that Her Majesty was still at dinner, they placed their victim in such a manner that it could not escape her sight. The head was that of the Princess de Lamballe, which though bleeding, was not disfigured, and her fine light hair still curling, waved around the pike."

Cléry at once ran up to the King, his countenance, he tells us, must have been so altered by terror that it was perceived by the Queen, from whom it was necessary to hide the cause. Two municipals were present.

"Why do you not go and dine?" inquired Marie Antoinette; to which Cléry replied that he was not well. At the same moment another municipal entered the room and spoke to his associates in a mysterious manner. The King perceiving this, asked them if his family was not in safety.

"It has been reported," they replied, "that you and your family are gone from the tower, and the people are calling for you to appear at the window; but we shall not allow it, for they ought to have more confidence in their magistrates."

In the meantime, the clamour outside increased, and insults addressed to the Queen

were distinctly heard. Presently another municipal made his appearance, followed by four men nominally deputed by the mob to ascertain whether the Royal family was, or was not, in the tower of the Temple. One of these was attired in the uniform of the National Guards, with two epaulettes, and holding a huge sabre in his hand. He insisted that the prisoners should show themselves at the windows, but the municipals on guard would not allow it; upon which this fellow said to the Queen in the most insolent manner: "They want to keep you from seeing La Lamballe's head, which has been brought here, that you may know how the people avenge themselves upon their tyrants." He then added immediately. "I advise you to show yourself, if you would not have them come up here." At these words the Queen fainted away, falling in the arms of Cléry and Madame Elizabeth, who placed her in a chair, and her children, bursting into tears, endeavoured by their caresses to bring her to her senses. The wretch who had been the cause of this, stood looking on, when the King exclaimed in a firm voice, "Sir! We are prepared for everything, but you might

have dispensed with relating this horrible disaster to the Queen;" whereupon the National Guard slunk away with his companions.

The Queen, coming to herself, mingled her tears with those of her children, and they all removed to Madame Elizabeth's room, where the noises of the mob were less heard. Cléry remained in the Queen's chamber, and looking out of the window through the blinds, again saw the head of the poor Princess; in his opinion the crowd seemed disposed to force the gates of the Temple.

It afterwards transpired that the municipals who were then on guard, had much difficulty in preventing the mob from rushing in, and that, for the space of six hours, it was very doubtful whether the Royal Family would be massacred or not. At eight in the evening, however, all was quiet in the neighbourhood of the Temple; but not so in other parts of Paris, where murders continued to be perpetrated for the next four or five days.

The Duc de Penthièvre, father-in-law of the Princess de Lamballe, and a man who enjoyed the greatest esteem, made the most extraordinary efforts to save her. As soon as it was rumoured that the prisoners would

be massacred, he engaged a person by means of an enormous bribe, to take her from the prison during night. But the plot failed, on account of another staunch friend having unfortunately succeeded in warning her by no means to allow herself to be led away, as it would, she was (wrongly) assured, be certain death. When the agent of the Duc de Penthièvre gained access to her, she absolutely refused to move in consequence of this second warning.

Those who would wish to have more details concerning the life of this unfortunate person, may be referred to a little work published only about ten years ago, entitled "La Princesse de Lamballe, sa vie et sa mort, d'après des documents inédits par M. Lescurle." On her husband's premature decease she retired to the château of her father-in-law, who became, in fact, a real father to her. From this position she was drawn into the society of the Queen, who became also devotedly attached to her; and to the time of her death she enjoyed the utmost confidence of both Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.

It was a man of colour named Delorme, who carried the head of the victim to the

Temple, and the reason why Cléry speaks of it as not being disfigured, and the hair still in curls, is accounted for by the fact that the assassins had it dressed at a *perruquier's* on the way, in order that the Queen might easily recognise it when she saw it; however, she did not see it.

The two Communists who ordered the murder of the Princess de Lamballe, were Hébert and Lhuillier, members of the Jacobin Club. The first met with his fate on the 24th of March, 1794; he was executed. Thiers says: "Hébert was put to open shame; they hardly cared to charge him with any *political* acts, they contented themselves with proving that he was guilty of stealing shirts and handkerchiefs." On his way to the scaffold he evinced the greatest cowardice, and fainted two or three times. What became of the other scoundrel we do not know; but Saint Méard, in his "Rélation des Massacres de Septembre," says of those concerned in these horrible scenes, that "all who escaped execution ended their days in the most abject misery."

XXVII.

LIEUTENANT GOSNAY.

DURING the latter portion of the reign of Louis XVI. a young man of good family, named Gosnay, served in the army. He was at first nothing more than a private in a regiment of grenadiers, but having raised himself to the rank of lieutenant in the palmy days of Royalty, if indeed, there ever were such days in this terrible reign, he left the army in disgust at the outbreak of the Revolution, and retired to reside once more at his father's house. But being still young, still of an age to serve when the Republic was established, he was compelled to enrol himself under its standard.

Unfortunately for this young soldier he detested the new order of things, and spoke of

the Revolution not only with derision but with absolute scorn. Shortly after the King's death when the people of Lyons, a town then full of Royalists, were attacked by the troops of the Convention, Gosnay, still a young, energetic and courageous fellow, was at Chalons-sur-Saône, and got engaged one day in a serious quarrel between some Royalists and Republicans. Swords were drawn, and many of the revolutionists were struck down to the cry of "Vive le Roi!" But the Royalists were soon outnumbered and taken prisoners, and as Gosnay had particularly distinguished himself in this affray, he was sent before one of the revolutionary tribunals. He knew perfectly well that nothing could save him from death; nevertheless, his natural gaiety never forsook him, he did not display the slightest uneasiness, but used to say (according to Beaulieu who has written a short account of him in his "Essais Historiques,") "I shall be guillotined either to-morrow or the next day," just as he might have said "I shall go to-morrow to such or such a party of pleasure."

Young Gosnay was a very handsome man, of easy and attractive manners, and not devoid of education. He had a charming expression of countenance, was naturally gifted and witty,

and had a most exuberant flow of spirits—but he was poor.

As he could not afford to purchase a bed, he was obliged to sleep in his prison cell upon the hard straw mattress, the luxury of bed-clothes being unprovided by the authorities. The first thing in the morning, though it was bitterly cold weather, he would undress and proceed to wash himself from head to foot at a water tap in the courtyard of the prison. After this, he put on his elegant Hussar uniform of fine cloth, and proceeded to the bars of the prison gates, through which he entered freely into conversation with the wives and relatives who came to visit the other Royalist prisoners. To most of them his case was well known, and they all took considerable interest in the gallant young officer who had so staunchly defended their cause. Everything he said was listened to with the utmost pleasure, and his appearance at the gates of the prison was always hailed by a murmur of delight.

It happened that at one of these meetings, Gosnay made a vivid impression upon a young and handsome lady, who from that moment took the greatest interest in him. He was not long in perceiving this, and it ended in the young lady

declaring her passion and making known at the same time that she was possessed of an ample fortune.

The next thing to be done was to get the interesting prisoner set at liberty. The lady thought she could manage to effect this and determined to leave nothing untried.

Gosnay had no political influence whatever; all that he could do was to wield a heavy sabre with some effect in a charge of cavalry; but his means did not go beyond that. Moreover, he was totally devoid of fortune, and could, of course, do nothing in the way of bribery.

Not so, however, the fair young damsel, who was now devoted heart and soul to his cause. She was wealthy, and her purse procured her a royal road from the doorkeeper of the revolutionary tribunal to the no less wretched, but elevated individual, Fouquier Tainville, who was at the head of affairs there. As the result of this visit, it was found that neither judges nor jury had any personal animosity against our young Hussar, that very little importance was attached either to his being saved or executed, finally that he might certainly hope to be let off if he only conducted himself with ordinary prudence.

It was well known, however, in the prison, that this was his weak point. Prudence seemed to have no existence in his mind. Returning to the prison gates, his fair admirer informed him of the disposition of the judges, and Gosnay promised faithfully to adhere to her instructions with regard to prudent conduct; but he kept none of his promises.

Beaulieu (the author of the "Essais,") who was in prison with him, tells us that when one of the gaolers brought Gosnay the usual summons-paper, he doubled it up, took it to the fire and used it to light his pipe! There was not, perhaps, in the whole of France, one person, however bold, that would have dared to have done such a thing as this. In fact, it was almost equivalent to instant death; but so greatly was the young Royalist soldier admired, not only by his fellow prisoners, but even by the gaolers themselves, that on the occasion of this piece of audacity, the latter actually screened him by declaring at headquarters that the said summons-paper had not been delivered to them, or had been lost by some unaccountable neglect; so that his trial was postponed to another day. The same indisputable authority declares that when the next summons-paper was served

upon him, Gosnay treated it exactly in the same manner; he took it with a scornful smile, held it to the fire and lit his pipe with it!

All this, in the eyes of many, will be considered nothing less than dangerous, foolhardy bragadocio; but such conduct was essentially French, and met with unsuppressed admiration. This time, again, the gaolers, in spite of their usual barbarity, shielded him from almost instant death by means of some more or less ingenious excuse to the astonishment of every inmate of the prison.

However, on this occasion, the other prisoners, who held him in such high esteem, came forward altogether, and begged Gosnay, not only for his own sake, but for that of the charming young lady who had interested herself so deeply in his cause, to become more prudent in his conduct. They all pointed out to him how useless his death, however heroic, would prove to the Royalist cause. He listened with respectful attention to their entreaties, thanked his good-natured companions for their kind interest, and promised to do all that he could to induce his judges to be lenient towards him.

His companions in captivity then invited him to breakfast with them the next morning; it was

the day on which he was cited to appear before the revolutionary tribunal, at the hour of eleven. During the breakfast no one could have been in gayer spirits than Gosnay; there was nothing forced or artificial in his manner, he was entirely himself, and kept his companions in roars of laughter the whole time.

At last the sad moment arrived to take leave of them. He then rose from the table and embraced his jovial companions one by one, after which he said in a clear ringing voice. "My dear friends, you have given me an excellent breakfast in this world, I will go and prepare a supper for you in the next—give me your orders." With these words on his lips he followed the gendarmes out of the prison.

The young lady's visits to the higher functionaries had evidently made some impression. Neither the Public Accuser nor the President of the Tribunal appeared to treat Gosnay with that persecuting rigour which characterised their demeanour towards the generality of the victims brought before them. But the gallant young soldier spoilt everything by his audacious behaviour. He did not take the slightest pains to shield his conduct or his opinions; he refused absolutely to avail himself of answers that were

almost put into his mouth by the judges themselves; and when his advocate began to plead for him, the spirited Royalist, as if indignant at the idea of having to plead at all before such scoundrels, interrupted him abruptly:

"Sir, you who are the official defendant in this case, I beg you will not defend me, and you, Public Accuser, do your wretched work—give your orders to send me to the guillotine!"

This was, indeed, little short of mania. The fair lady, who was present at the trial, fainted away at these dreadful words, and was carried out of the Court by her relatives; she was in a state of insensibility when the verdict of death was pronounced against the handsome and intrepid young officer whom she had fondly looked upon as her own; whom she had every reason to believe she had saved, and whom she expected to see set at liberty, and raised, by her efforts, from a life of hardship and misery, to perfect happiness!

He passed through the courtyard of the prison with a kind of triumphant air, smiling, and waving his hand to his companions. When about to mount into the fatal cart that was waiting to carry him to the place of execution, he beckoned to a gaoler named

Rivière, who had shown him some kindness during his stay in the prison, requested him to bring a little brandy, and drink half of it with him out of the same glass. "I should imagine," he said, "that you owed me a grudge, if you did not comply with this modest request." Gosnay's jovial manner did not forsake him for an instant.

The annals of the Revolution contain several cases very similar to that we have just related. Hundreds of distinguished men were so utterly disgusted with the new state of things, that life was no longer of any importance to them. On learning the death of the King, more than one officer died of grief, the librarian Vente lost his reason, and a *perruquier* of the Rue St. Catherine committed suicide. We have already referred to the energetic reply given by the distinguished artillery officer, Chappuy de Maubart, when he was offered his life if he would serve the Republic.

XXVIII.

THE MEMOIRS OF MADAME ROLAND.

AMONG the women of the great Revolution, Madame Roland forms a sublime figure, never to be forgotten. It was she who dictated to her husband, during his first Ministry, that celebrated letter to the King which is given entire in Thiers' History. If Louis XVI. had only possessed sufficient foresight to have taken it to heart and acted according to its instructions, what a different future would have been in store for him and for France!

Like Charlotte Corday, Marie Antoinette, the Princess de Monaco, and so many other beautiful and accomplished women,* Madame

* It is a striking fact that nearly all the more prominent female victims of the Revolution were women particularly distinguished for their personal attractions; we need only mention

Roland was one of the victims of these disastrous times, who excites the most compassionate interest. She was alike distinguished for her beauty, her great talents, her pure patriotism and her elevated character. The influence which she exercised upon the more moderate section of the Republicans, the fortitude with which she bore her infamous imprisonment, and the bold, admirable manner in which she met her tragic fate, have contributed to make her name popular throughout the world. Madame Roland was, without doubt, one of the finest characters of this period of history, and a fair representation of what was best in the party that overthrew the monarchy. In the prejudices of that party she fully shared, and her "Memoirs" speak of Louis XVI., and of his political intentions in terms which history has certainly not ratified. On the other hand, she adhered to the party of the Girondists, sharing their

Queen Marie Antoinette, the Princess de Lamballe, Madame Roland, Madame Camille Desmoulins, the Princess de Monaco, Charlotte Corday, all beautiful women; but there were many others for whose names we have no space here, who combined great physical beauty with moral courage and intelligence.

abhorrence of the Jacobin excesses, and was, consequently, lost with them in their fall.

Born in Paris on the 18th of March, 1754, this celebrated woman was the child of Phlipon, the engraver. In her "Memoirs," she speaks chiefly of her mother with the tenderest affection and respect, and as having encouraged her to study. At a very early age Marie Phlipon had an extraordinary love of books, and was naturally of a religious disposition. When only eleven, she went to a convent to prepare for her "first communion," and there made the acquaintance of a girl named Sophie Canet, which afterwards proved a very strong attachment. The frequent letters to this intimate friend have been published, and form a tolerably complete history of her life, up to the date of her marriage with Roland. The correspondence then ceased, at her husband's urgent request (on account of differences in political opinion, it is said), and Madame Roland, in after years, states that this act on the part of her husband was "ill-judged." But the bond of affection was by no means severed, for we find Sophie's sister, Henriette, coming to the St. Pélagie prison, where her dear friend was incarcerated,

and offering to die in her place. Henriette was then a widow and had no children; Madame Roland had a husband, already advanced in years, and a charming daughter. Her friend's wish was to exchange clothing with her, and to remain in the prison while she escaped; but her entreaties were fruitless.

"But they would kill you," was the reply she got, "your blood would be upon me. Rather would I die a thousand deaths than have to reproach myself with yours!"

During her youth, nothing particularly striking occurs to break the monotony of her studious life till the year 1775, when, to her indescribable grief, her mother died, and her father's depraved and cruel conduct compelled her to leave home. It was whilst thus living in solitude, and overwhelmed with grief and anxiety that Marie Phlipon received, and some time afterwards accepted, a proposal of marriage from M. Roland, who succeeded in gaining her affection, though many others had attempted it in vain. They were married early in 1780, Roland being twenty years older than his wife, a man of learning and severe moral principle, but accused by some

of being egotistical and somewhat pedantic. At this time he was Government-Inspector of Arts and Manufactures, and an author. His handsome young wife took the keenest interest in his literary pursuits, and afforded him considerable assistance in his writings. When he afterwards became a Minister, she could not, of course, take part in the administrative portion of his duties, but if there were a circular to be despatched, a series of instructions, or an important paper to be drawn up, they invariably conferred together on the subject and she usually confided their ideas to paper, "having more time to wield the pen than he had." With all this she prided herself upon never neglecting her household duties.

Roland was born in 1732, at Le Clos de la Platière, twelve miles from Villefranche, of an ancient and noble family, and, in spite of his Republican principles, he was proud of his descent. He was the youngest of five brothers, and was educated for the church. Not liking this profession, he went to Rouen where one of his relatives, a M. Godinot, was inspector of manufactures, and proposed to him to follow this branch of administration.

Becoming soon distinguished for his talents and industry, the government bestowed upon him a similar post at Amiens, the town in which Sophie Canet's family resided. It was on a visit to the house of Madame Canet in 1775, that Roland first heard of the lady who was destined to become his wife. "The conversation ran upon an extraordinary young lady in Paris, Mademoiselle Phlipon, and Roland asked for a letter of introduction to her," we are told. When they afterwards met, he found her mourning her mother's death; affliction gave to her lovely features the greatest charm. She was then in her twenty first year, and Roland, though double her age, felt an irresistable attraction for her. On her part she considered him respectable rather than captivating, and was inclined to reject his advances. At this time Roland had just returned from travelling in Germany, and being about to visit Italy, requested permission to leave all his papers in Marie Phlipon's charge during his absence. This mark of esteem produced a regard which ended in a closer union. Whilst in Italy, he wrote letters to her addressed to a convent to which she had retired, and sent her through the

medium of his brother, a Benedictine Prior, his "Observations on the Men, Manners and Manufactures of Italy," a work which was afterwards published. On his return to France, he married her in spite of her dissipated father's opposition.

The first year of their marriage was spent in Paris, devoted to literary and scientific labours in which the young wife took a share; she copied her husband's manuscripts, corrected his proofs, and went through a course of study in Natural History, devoting much time to Botany, of which she appears to have been especially fond. The next four years were spent at Amiens, (where her only child, Eudora, afterwards Madame Champagneux, was born), still assisting her husband in his literary work, he being then engaged upon the celebrated "Encyclopedia," of which a considerable portion was confided to him. They lived a most devoted life, never quitting their study but for rural enjoyments, during which Madame Roland made a herbarium of the plants of Picardy, and wrote a small treatise on Botany.

In 1784 this happy and industrious couple removed to Lyons, and resided some time at La Platière, near Villefranche, M. Roland's birth place. This same year they also visited England

and made numerous friends among the scientific and literary men of the day. In 1787 they travelled through Germany, and, on the death of M. Roland's mother, went to reside permanently at Le Clos de La Platière, where they pursued their useful labours, and where Madame Roland devoted herself to the welfare of the poor, acting as friend and physician to all the peasantry for miles round.

At last the fatal year of the revolutionary outbreak arrived, 1789 had come, and with it a serious illness; Roland was attacked by a violent fever, and his young wife saved his life by her devoted attention; she remained at his bedside for six consecutive nights without ever changing her clothes, and nursed him assiduously during many long months of convalescence. Then the fearful Revolution burst forth. Friends of humanity and adorers of liberty, both husband and wife fondly hoped, with millions of others throughout Europe, that the period for ameliorating the condition of mankind was at hand, and that the miseries of the lower orders in France, which they had so often lamented and contributed to relieve, were about to terminate.

At Lyons, Roland found two sets of people

among his friends at this period. One class, accustomed to the selfish calculations of commerce, could not see why he should applaud those changes by which the lower classes alone were likely to benefit. Another, the patriots, rejoiced to find a man of good family and fortune attached to their cause, and at once elected him one of their officers. They soon sent him on a mission to the National Assembly.

This occurred in December, 1791; the inspectorship of arts and manufactures being abolished, Roland, with his wife and daughter went to Paris on the mission in question. There he soon became intimate with the celebrated Brissot, (who was afterwards executed on the 30th of October, 1793, with the other Girondists) and joined the Jacobin Club, before it had lost all moral restraint, becoming, with his wife's assistance, extremely active as a member of the Corresponding Committee.

Nothing could exceed his, nor Madame Roland's, surprise when, on the 24th of March 1792, he was appointed Minister of the Interior by Louis XVI., who had determined to try to govern with a popular ministry. It is generally thought that Roland was quite unfit for so important a post, and during his short tenure of

office he appears to have weakened the monarchy. Nor did he strengthen it by his resignation. Two months later, on the dreadful 10th of August, the people stormed the Tuileries, the King fled for refuge to the National Assembly and was deposed ; the revolution was triumphant, and Roland was reinstated Minister of the Interior.

But the times were changed. They had become terrible, and the post of Minister was more full of difficulties and responsibilities than ever. With the best intentions, Roland was powerless as a leader of men. It is doubtful whether the greatest statesman that ever lived could have checked the ruffianly spirit of the mob. It would have required a man of decision, fertile in expedients, firm and prompt in action ; instead of which we find Roland issuing sententious circulars, and delivering pedantic speeches whilst the mob was butchering the inmates of the prisons !

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that by protesting against that which he could not prevent, he exposed himself to almost instant death. In this duty Madame Roland took a noble part. The charms of her conversation, and the nobleness of her sentiments had won her great esteem

among her husband's political friends, the Girondists. This influence she made immense use of against the Jacobins who had authorized the September murders, and it was not long before she had enlisted all honest, conscientious men against these ruffians. But, unfortunately, the legislature was weak and the murderous Commune all powerful. The fall of the Girondists came, and with it, that of Roland. Already he had resigned his post of Minister, "which he considered it a dishonour to hold any longer." In spite of his resignation, however, the Communists got his arrest decreed by the Revolutionary Committee on the 31st of May, and he fled to Rouen.

Madame Roland made no attempt to escape. While she thought it quite right that her husband should avoid the popular fury, she says:

"As for me, their interest to do me harm could not be so great; to kill me would be an act so detestable that they would not care to incur its odium. . . . . One of two things must happen—either I am only in danger of an imprisonment and of a judicial procedure, which I shall be able to render useful to my country and to my husband; or, if I must die, it will only be in

an extremity in which life will be hateful to me."

We must refer to her celebrated "Memoirs," and "Letters," more especially to the latest editions of these voluminous writings edited by M. Dauban, for all the details of her imprisonment, the cruel farce of her release and recapture, the respect with which she inspired even the lowest characters, the favours which her gracious conduct procured from the gaolers, though she never stooped to ask a favour from any of her persecutors, nor did she cease to speak to them with the utmost contempt. The atrocious Revolutionary tribunal actually trembled lest her eloquent voice should be heard at the trials of the Girondists. Most remarkable indeed, was her fortitude under such undeserved adversity, and truly admirable was the serenity of mind with which she wrote her "Memoirs" in the narrow precincts of an odious prison. Lastly, she went to the scaffold (at the early age of thirty-eight!) in a manner of which a Roman or a Spartan might have been proud, and her afflicted husband committed suicide on hearing of this dreadful catastrophe.

In the latter years of her life, Madame

Roland appears to have indulged in a platonic affection for Buzot, a well known proscribed Girondist, which was reciprocated though he was also married.

The letters which passed between them only came to light a few years ago. In the last trials of a troubled and excited existence they appear to have effectually sustained each other's courage. Buzot had been one of the most ardent Girondist members of the National Convention, and a frequent guest at Roland's house—one of the most distinguished *salons* of Paris in 1792. When the "Memoirs" were being written, he was a fugitive from Paris, striving to raise the provinces against the ruffians of the capital.

The "Memoirs" of Madame Roland were written in the few painful months of her captivity. They were not only composed under great difficulties, but with great difficulty preserved, and a portion, unfortunately, perished in the flames. This accounts for their fragmentary character. They consist of a very interesting account of her early life, a sketch of her husband's public career, and her own opinions of the doings of the Communists, which she describes with abhorrence up to

the last moment. Her style is extremely frank and fluent, somewhat pretentious, and at times indiscreet. The recent French editions of M. Dauban and M. Faugère are much more complete than the older edition of 1795 by Bose, in which many passages appear to have been suppressed. M. Faugère, was on intimate terms with Madame Roland's daughter (Madame Champagneux) and obtained from her a correct copy of the original "Memoirs," which he published. On her death, this lady left the MS. to the Imperial Library at Paris, where M. Dauban had access to it, and has also published an annotated edition of the "Memoirs," as well as a "Study" on Madame Roland. (*Vide* XXXII.)

In speaking of the little room in which she was imprisoned at L'Abbaye, this heroic woman says that her arrangement of it, her flowers, and her books, excited the astonishment of all who happened to visit the place. She never thought that it was destined to be occupied a little later by the Girondist Brissot, and soon afterwards by "a heroine worthy of a better century—the celebrated Charlotte Corday."

Her second imprisonment was at the St. Pélagie, where she was allotted a miserable cell,

surrounded by others filled with criminals and women of the lowest characters, whose coarse language reached her all day long. She says of it:—

"Voici donc le séjour qui était réservé à la digne épouse d'un homme de bien! Si c'est là le prix de la vertu sur la terre, qu'on ne s'étonne donc plus de mon mépris pour la vie et de la résolution avec laquelle je saurais affronter la mort. Jamais elle ne m'avait paru redoutable; mais aujourd'hui je lui trouve des charmes: je l'aurais embrassé avec transport si ma fille ne m'invitait à ne point l'abandonner encore."

These lines are a good illustration of her style, and of her bold character, which she never belied, even at the foot of the scaffold.

Without being a striking beauty, Madame Roland was certainly interesting. Her face was perfect in form, with large dark eyes full of expression. She was tall, and her figure extremely elegant; her voice was as charming as her eloquence was grand. Thiers says that she combined all the graces of a Frenchwoman with the heroism of a Roman matron; and that verdict will be endorsed by all who study her life.

XXIX.

THE MAN WHO NEVER LOST HIS TEMPER.

ANGER, according to Clarendon, is the most impotent passion that develops itself in the mind of man: "it effects nothing it goes about, and hurts the man who is possessed by it more than any other against whom it is directed." There is, doubtless, a considerable amount of truth in those few words. Yet, how rarely, in the whole annals of mankind do we meet with an individual who never, under any circumstances, loses his temper; and how little should we expect to meet with such a character in the passionate times of Louis XVI!

It was in the course of a quiet evening at Madame Necker's, that the following very curious episode in the life of the Genevese philosopher, M. Abauzit, came to light. There

were present on this occasion, besides the Minister Necker and his distinguished daughter Madame de Staël, already well known in the literary and political world, several eminent persons, among others the poet Marmontel, M. de La Harpe, la Marquise de Blot, and Madame de Barbantane. The Duchess d'Abrantès has left us a short but interesting account of the occurrence.

"But who is this M. Abauzit whose name has been so frequently mentioned?" exclaimed Madame de Blot, "what sort of a man is he?"

"He is a Genevese, resident in the neighbourhood of Paris," replied La Harpe; "and, moreover, he is an intimate friend of Madame Necker. But she herself must tell you all about him, it is only fit for an angel to exhibit the qualities of a philosopher, the more so as there are no saints in his religion."

Abauzit was, in fact, like most Genevese, and like Madame Necker herself, a Protestant; and this direct allusion by La Harpe to the angelic disposition of the Minister's invalid wife was nothing more than she deserved.

"But you cannot have forgotten what Rousseau has written about him?" said Madame Necker, turning to the first speaker. "Rousseau,

long ago, made him celebrated in Geneva; do you not recollect what he has said of him?"

"I assure you," said Madame de Blot, "that his name is quite unknown to me; I cannot imagine in what way this person has become so famous."

"It is," rejoined Madame Necker, "by the exercise of a virtue which is already very rare among us, and is becoming more so every day. If Monsieur Abauzit had lived in the times of Epictetus, he would have been duly appreciated and honoured, but now-a-days, the virtuous conduct which distinguishes him begins to be regarded as little less than weakness."

"Ah! now I remember the gentleman of whom you are speaking," said Madame de Barbantane. "Yes, it can be no other than the quiet, philosophical little man I saw coming out of your house the other day. Do tell us something about him."

"Yes, mother," added Madame de Staël, "relate your anecdote of M. Abauzit, it is perfect; and you tell it so well!"

Thereupon the guests all grouped themselves round Madame Necker, who forthwith related the following anecdote:—

"You must know," she began, "that M.

Abauzit is a man who *never* in the whole course of his life got into a passion ; he NEVER allowed his temper to get the better of him ; and was NEVER known to be angry with anybody or anything. During the whole course of his placid existence the calm of his dignified honest countenance has never once been interrupted by any passionate emotion akin to anger or bad humour ; but his friends, much as they esteemed him, could not be made to believe in such an uniformity of good temper. They protested that he had not been, like other men, subject to any severe trials ; and felt assured that his ordinary calm manner would certainly yield, on the occurrence of any very disagreeable circumstances.

"They went so far as to make a bet among themselves that such would be the case, and proceeded to consult his housekeeper upon the subject.

"This worthy old woman had been thirty years in her master's service, and almost adored him. She thought over all his weak points that she was well acquainted with, and, at last, declared, solemnly, that she did not see any way in which the bet could be won—she had been thirty years in his house and had never seen him once in a passion.

"'Not once in thirty years!' exclaimed the friends; 'that is rather too much for our powers of credulity! it is simply impossible! not *one* single little burst of temper in the whole thirty years! Think over it, my good woman; confess that he has been *once* angry, at least.'

"'But I cannot tell an untruth,' she replied.

"'Well, tell us how we can vex him; tell us how he can be put into a passion. We like him as much as you do, as you are well aware; but, we have determined to effect our purpose, and you must assist us—you will be rewarded. Most people are difficult enough to please, but your master appears to be just as difficult to vex!'

"Thereupon, a long consultation took place between them on the most probable method of causing M. Abauzit to lose his temper. After considerable time had been expended upon fruitless propositions of every kind, old Marguerite thought she had discovered a means by which the desired effect could, perhaps, be produced. 'But,' she added, 'I really do not see why you should wish to deprive my master of his ordinary peace of mind, even for one moment.'

"'What does it matter?' said the friends, 'we are just as fond of him as you are.'

"'I am not so sure of that,' she hinted.

"'We tell you we are, and we will make it all right afterwards; pray do not be uneasy on that score. Well, what have you thought of?'

"'This is it,' said Marguerite, 'if there is one thing that my master likes better than another it is to sleep well, to have a comfortable bed. He has been accustomed to this all his life. Now, what I propose, you see, is not to make his bed in the morning, and then I'll say I forgot it.'

"The expedient appeared admirable, and it was decided that this wonderful outburst of genius in the mind of the old servant should be put into a practical form without delay. In the meantime, in order to assist matters, the friends agreed to take M. Abauzit a long walk during the afternoon, so that he should be thoroughly tired and ready for bed when he returned home. He was, in fact, very tired when he dragged his weary limbs to his bed-room, and prepared to take that repose which, at certain intervals, nature prescribes for us all. On turning to his bed he found it was not made! . . . .

"The next morning he called to the housekeeper, 'Marguerite, it appears that you forgot

to make my bed yesterday, try and not forget it to-day.'

"Soon after the friends arrived, all anxious to hear the result of the strategy. 'All he said.' the old servant informed them, 'was that I was to try and not forget his bed to-day.'

"'But you *will* forget it!' they ejaculated, 'remember your promise, and we shall reward you well for all your trouble.'

"The next day the same thing occurred. M. Abauzit returned after a long walk, dreadfully tired, went into his room, and found his bed just as he had left it.

"On rising in the morning he called up Marguerite.

"'Marguerite,' he said in his usual quiet manner, 'you have forgotten again to make my bed, do have the goodness to think of it.'

"When the friends arrived a second time and learned all that had happened, they could not suppress their astonishment, and it was with great difficulty that they persuaded old Marguerite to continue her tactics for one day more. After much persuasion, however, she at last consented. The bed was left unmade for the third time.

"In the morning, M. Abauzit met her upon

the stairs, and without raising the ordinary tone of his voice, he said:

"'Marguerite, you never made my bed yesterday; it appears that you have decided not to make it any more, perhaps you find it too fatiguing. However, there is no great harm in it, for I am beginning to get accustomed to it.'

"At these words the old servant could keep the secret no longer. She burst into tears, begged his pardon, and told her master the whole story. Whether he suspected, or not, that all this was done for a purpose, we do not know, but the fact remains that his temper was never ruffled in the slightest degree, and, whether patience or good-nature, it is a feature worthy of figuring in the life of Socrates."

In causing M. Abauzit to take a long walk every day, his friends went beyond the bounds of reason; for, it cannot be doubted that the worthy old gentleman would have found his unmade bed less pleasant had he been less fatigued. In their extreme anxiety to accomplish the ridiculous task which they had undertaken, they went so far as to act against their own interests, as most people do under similar circumstances.

Madame de Staël, although she enjoyed hearing her mother relate the little anecdote, always looked upon this plot as a most iniquitous attempt upon the peaceful character of the estimable M. Abauzit.

XXX.

THE ITALIAN OPERA.

IT was in the reign of Louis XVI. that Italian Opera became established in France. Already for some years past the irresistible Italian music had found a home in London and Vienna; but the French capital had been content with its own composers, who certainly shone with great brilliancy at this period.

Besides the celebrated Tuscan violinist, Viotti, who was conductor of the French Opera just before the commencement of the Revolution, there were in Paris two very distinguished Italian composers, Piccini and Cherubini; and very few years elapsed before Spontini and Paisiello arrived and firmly established themselves there. The Italian Opera had not in those days a permanent house in Paris, as at present, but it was

soon to acquire one. The influence of the sweet *cantabile* and rich *fioritura* of the southern artists had made itself felt so deeply throughout Europe that even Paris itself was about to create an Italian Opera. In spite of its great number of eminent French composers, whose names we have mentioned in a former chapter, and in spite of Glück and his German influence, aided by the rapidly rising popularity of Mozart, nowhere was Italian music more enjoyed than in Paris.

Just before the Revolution we find Cherubini endeavouring to combine the Italian and German styles of composition (in some instances successfully, in others much less so) to suit the prevailing taste of the more enlightened French citizens, so that at a certain moment there were in Paris three distinct characters of music; the pure Italian of Piccini, the pure German of Glück, and a kind of mixture of these in some compositions of Cherubini. A good mixture of Italian and German would, it was thought, produce a superior kind of French music, and Cherubini had naturalized himself a Frenchman, or at least he had, like Rossini in more modern times, taken up his residence permanently in Paris. Whether he gave any thoughts to politics or not is very

questionable, but he was an aristocrat if anything; though for no less than three years he lived under the same roof as his celebrated compatriot, Viotti, who was an utter republican.

In the introduction to my "Biographical Sketches of Celebrated Violinists," I have shown how it came to pass that Italian music should have exercised this wonderful influence upon the whole of the lyric and dramatic world.

It was not until close upon the outbreak of the Revolution that Italian opera got a permanent theatre in Paris. It was early in 1789 that Léonard, the perfumer to Queen Marie Antoinette, a man of considerable wealth, obtained, through her influence and good-nature, a license to open a theatre for Italian opera. He at once despatched Viotti to Italy in order to engage singers for it. The great violinist returned after having secured the services of Viganoni, Mandini, Mengozzi, Revedino, Raffanelli (a splendid actor) and the two *prime donne* Morichelli and Banti. We have given, in a previous chapter of the present work, an account of the manner in which the last named most brilliant singer was discovered some ten years previously. Signora Baletti, who had already made a distinguished *débût* at the Concerts Spirituels, was also en-

gaged. Several of these eminent artistes sang afterwards in London, where Viganoni and Banti were particularly popular.

The entire company was placed under the patronage of the elder brother of Louis XVI., Monsieur, Comte de Provence (afterwards Louis XVIII.), and the Théâtre de Monsieur, as the early Paris Italian Opera was termed, duly opened in one of the great halls of the Tuileries on the 26th of January, 1789. The Italian troupe went by the name of the "Troupe de Monsieur," or sometimes by that of the "Bouffons," the French mode of designating the performers of Opera Buffa.

They sang in the works of Cimarosa, Paisiello, Guglielmi and others, with great success. Cherubini, who had by this time become recognised as a young composer of very great merit, was made director of the *troupe*, and had to arrange the pieces and assign parts to the singers, after writing *arias* and *cadenzas* to be introduced into the various works performed. He sometimes led the orchestra; but the task usually fell to the lot of Mestrino, a most accomplished musician, who died in 1790, when Puppo, the violinist, succeeded him.

Among the operas performed we may mention

Paisiello's "La Molinara," Guglielmi's "La Pastorella Nobile," Cimarosa's "L'Italiana in Londra," Gazzaniga's "Il Don Giovanni Tenario," besides many others. These were greatly admired by Louis XVI., who attended many of the performances; and the same may be said of Anfossi's "Viaggiatori felici."

At this time the concerts of the Loge Olympique were warmly patronised by Marie Antoinette, who granted the Loge an apartment at the Tuileries for the performances. It was there, in 1789, that Madame Todi sang with such great success the scena: "Sarete alfin contenti," written expressly for her by Cherubini.

These great musicians never dreamed of the dreadful times that were at hand, for we find that in 1790 Cherubini began an opera for Louis XVI., to be performed at the Tuileries. The work was entitled "Marguerite d'Anjou;" but the progress of the Revolution prevented its performance, and the composer retired for a short time into Normandy, returning shortly before the King was escorted by the furious mob from Versailles to Paris.

The Revolution was, of course, a fearful event for the Italian artistes, and with it poor

Cherubini's hopes became almost as clouded as those of the monarch himself. His connections and patrons all belonged to the aristocracy, and now they were finding refuge in emigration or being murdered daily upon the scaffold.

We have an interesting and authentic account of this great composer from the pen of that eminently conscientious writer, Mr. Bellasis ("Memorials of Cherubini.") His lot, at this time, was that of many men who followed a similar career. During the first five years of anarchy he suffered many privations; his very livelihood became precarious; he was forced to live in great seclusion, "passing his time in studying music, the physical sciences, botany and drawing," limiting his acquaintance to a few trustworthy friends only. In early life Cherubini had taught himself to play a little on the violin, and this proved the means of saving his life in the hour of danger.

To stir out of doors was more or less of a risk to anyone who had been accustomed to frequent aristocratic circles. Numerous and reckless mobs paraded the streets day and night. Once, however, on an occasion of extraordinary excitement, we are told, Cherubini fell into the hands of a band of *sans culottes*, and they determined

that he should lead them, and conduct their horrible songs. When he refused, they began shouting, "*A bas! l'aristocrat!*" and would, no doubt, have killed him, had not one of his friends at this particular moment thrust an old violin into his hands and persuaded him to save his life by leading the mob. The whole day long Cherubini and his fellow musician were compelled to accompany the hoarse yelling of the infuriated ruffians, and when, at last, a halt was made for refreshments, they were obliged to stand on empty barrels and play whilst the Communists feasted.

But besides this annoyance, he was enrolled in the National Guard, a circumstance which entailed the custody of prisoners and escorting the unfortunate victims to the bloody scaffold. He would gladly have quitted such scenes of horror; but he was engaged as leader of the Italian Opera till the year 1792, and, in the next place it was no easy matter to evade the vigilance of the officials in any attempt to escape from French territory—in case of failure it was almost certain death.

When Louis XVI. was brought by the mob from Versailles to Paris, the Italians had to leave their quarters at the Tuileries. They went to the Salle Nicolet near the Foire St. Germain,

and their Opera house was then called Théâtre de la Foire St. Germain. Garat, the famous French tenor, had joined the troupe; indeed, a French company now got incorporated with the Italians, and in 1791 the house was transferred to the Théâtre Feydeau.

In spite of the troubles of the epoch and the disastrous state of Paris, it is astonishing what a number of pieces were produced, and how much music was performed there between the years 1789 and 1800. There were no less than twenty-five theatres (besides concert rooms) of which about five were opera houses. In 1791 Cherubini and Viotti were installed with their Italian artistes at the Théâtre Feydeau. Méhul reigned supreme at the Théâtre Favart; but the Parisian world also rejoiced in listening to the excellent compositions of Grétry,* Piccini, Spontini, Gossec, Monsigny, Philidor (the great chess player, and composer of numerous popular operas) Steibelt, Glück, Boieldieu—who was just beginning his career—and the gifted young Lieutenant Dalayrac.

However, a single year brought about great changes in the political horizon, and in 1792 it had become so menacing that the Italians decided

* Grétry was a Belgian artiste, born at Liège.

upon taking their departure. Viotti, thoroughly disheartened, fled to London, where this eminent musician, the greatest violinist of his day, began business as a wine merchant!

When the unfortunate King mounted the scaffold in 1793, Cherubini had already taken refuge at a friend's house near Rouen, only to return when things had become more pacific.

It is curious to note that in January, 1796, Cherubini, formerly one of the many protégés of Marie Antoinette, presided at a musical party to celebrate the anniversary of the death of Louis XVI., and directed the performance of a chorus in which might be heard the oath of hatred to Royalty!

But then he was compelled to compose a quantity of revolutionary music, and, of course, his profession demanded that the composition should suit the words, whatever his private sentiments might have been. Later still, we find him writing music to Royalist Couplets, and to the words: *Vive le Roi!*

XXXI.

THE LAST DAYS OF CONDORCET.

FROM a purely scientific point of view, the eighteenth century is the most remarkable period with which we are acquainted. Never was there a time at which discovery and observation proceeded so rapidly and with such astonishing results. Revolution was the order of the day in science as well as in politics and religion. Lavoisier, whose name has been rendered immortal no less by his wonderful chemical discoveries, his theory of combustion and respiration, which laid the foundations of modern chemistry, than by his atrocious martyrdom on the scaffold, was one of the greatest philosophers of this wonderful age. His contemporaries in almost every country of the civilized world, incited by his zeal, were scarcely

less active in the career of research; and it would require several volumes to give even a sketch of the innumerable hidden secrets of Nature that were, during this eventful period, successively unfolded to mankind.

Franklin, in America, was drawing down the lightning from the storm-clouds and proving it to be identical with electricity.* Galvani in Italy was investigating the muscular movements of frogs' limbs, when his wife Lucia called his attention to the extraordinary electric action which occurs in this case; it resulted in the discovery of "galvanism," the basis of our present electric telegraph; it incited Volta, his contemporary, to imagine the electric battery that bears his name, and was destined to perform such marvellous things, leading, indeed, to the belief that the secret of life had, at last, been discovered. In the same country, Spallanzani was making the most curious experiments and describing, by means of his microscope, a new world of minute beings, invisible to the naked eye, (and not long before discovered by the learned Dutchman, Leuenhoek.) His friend

* An account of this wonderful discovery and several others alluded to in the text, has been given in my recent work, "Familiar Letters on some Mysteries of Nature, &c." London, 1876.

and correspondent Bonnet, of Geneva, was investigating the physiology of plants, the curious "alternate" propagation of certain insects, the extraordinary reproduction of the limbs of lizards and snails' heads; Trembley having already noticed that the *hydra*, or fresh-water polyp, reproduced parts of its body that were cut away. Black, in Scotland, made known the nature of carbonic acid and the composition of limestone, a discovery most fruitful in consequences and of the greatest use to Lavoisier. Schéele, in Sweden, put in evidence numerous new substances of immense interest; Phipson, in Birmingham, discovered and investigated the malleable properties of zinc at certain temperatures, thereby rendering this curious metal applicable to a multitude of uses; whilst Watt, having removed from Glasgow to that town, joined with Boulton and Roebuck to develope his discovery of the steam engine, which was to produce a revolution in men's affairs. Priestley was also then in Birmingham, writing on his celebrated discoveries of "different kinds of air."

Botanists and geologists were travelling over vast continents, collecting a useful store of facts to add to the comforts of mankind, whilst Paris, and the other large towns in France, were

steeped in blood—whilst the foremost scientific man of his day, and one of the most solicitous for the good of others, the illustrious Lavoisier, was mounting the steps of the scaffold.

We have not mentioned one quarter of the eminent men, each of whom during the reign of Louis XVI. contributed his *quantum* to the great stock of practical knowledge acquired by diligent study and research. Whilst the young Alexander von Humboldt was still a student at the University of Göttingen, Dolomieu, the French geologist, (after whom the rock "Dolomite" was named,) was pursuing his scientific researches on Mont Blanc and the Appennines, leading a most romantic life, bestrewn with difficulties, writing his mineralogical essays in prison at Messina, upon the pages of his bible, and proving the volcanic nature of basalt, which was to decide the discussions of the geologists of that day, and prepare the way for the great German *savant*.

There were, in fact, five great movements going on in France almost at the same moment: In Politics, between the Republicans and the Royalists; in Music, between the Glückists and the Piccinists; in Geology, the Neptunists and the Vulcanists; in Chemistry, the Phlogisticians

and the Antiphlogisticians; and in Philosophy, the Theologians and the Rationalists, all striving for the first place.

Condorcet was "perpetual Secretary" of the Academy of Sciences in Paris, a most honourable position, which placed him in communication with all the eminent scientific men of the day. But his mind turned more towards philosophy and politics than to science in the abstract. He was also one of the forty members of the French Academy (literature), and a voluminous writer. Born in Picardy in 1743, Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet, was forty-five years of age when, in 1787, the first glimpses of the great catastrophe dawned above the political horizon of the capital. He came of a good family, deriving its name from the ancestral Château of Condorcet in Dauphiny, and was educated by his uncle, the Bishop of Lisieux, who bestowed every care on his studies and found him many powerful friends and protectors to make up for his want of fortune. For Condorcet was never rich; and, moreover, was a man of great probity of character, which goes far to account for the extraordinary nature of his last days.

He married Sophie de Grouchy, (sister of the

well-known Maréchal), one of the most beautiful women of her day, and exceedingly clever; but a violent republican, who exercised no small influence on her husband's career. She it was, indeed, who induced him, when a member of the Chamber, to propose the "abolition of titles." Though a thorough man of the world, who shone brilliantly in society, Condorcet was never regarded as a very profound thinker or writer, in comparison with his illustrious contemporaries. His posthumous work "Esquisse du progrès de l'esprit humain," is generally considered the best of his writings, though it is characterised by a revolting materialism throughout. In spite of this tendency, however, the Marquis was an upright man, and his intentions were of the best. The society which frequented his drawing-room numbered many distinguished individuals, and was composed of some of the most honest men of the period. There were the two brothers Turgot, Suard, Malesherbes, the Abbé Morellet, the Abbé Soulavie, (author of the "Mémoires,") Marmontel, Helvétius, d'Alembert, the Duc de Lauraguais,* and several

* The friend of Lavoisier and of Sophie Arnoult, in conjunction with the great chemist he made many remarkable experiments, among others that of the combustion of the diamond, thus proving it to be crystallised carbon.

eminent members of the Academy of Sciences. This society suited his wife's tastes as well as his own, and the most agreeable evenings were passed in reading papers or notes, not only on scientific discoveries, but also on subjects connected with literature and the fine arts. Madame de Condorcet was an authoress, among other writings of hers we may observe that she translated from the English the well known work of Adam Smith, and enriched it with many valuable notes.

Condorcet had a remarkably expressive countenance, a vast and prominent forehead, small but sparkling eyes, a rather large aquiline nose, and a mouth about which there played, occasionally, a calm, but decidedly sardonic smile. His speech was hesitating, somewhat sarcastic at times, and invariably sensible and witty. His manners were modest and reserved, even cold, but his mind was on fire, and beneath that glacial forehead glowed a fierce heat of thought. "Do not deceive yourself," said d'Alembert, one day, to a friend who was speaking of Condorcet, "he is a volcano covered with snow." With all this, his disposition was eminently good, and he was equitable or just in all that he said, did, or wrote. His writings are very numerous;

among the best were a series of articles contributed to two papers, "La Feuille Villageoise" and the "Chronique de Paris." His "Life of Voltaire," and "Life of Turgot," also won him much literary fame; and his "Mémoires" are full of wit and anecdote.

As regards science, he was a mathematician, and several of his mathematical works claim for him a very distinguished place in the scientific world of his day; he was elected "perpetual Secretary" of the Academy of Sciences, principally on the strength of his excellent biographical work, "Eloge des Académiciens morts depuis 1699." No man in Paris had a stronger impression of the honest motives of Louis XVI., and yet he lowered himself to vote on the side of those who desired to kill their King! We have the strongest proof that Condorcet acknowledged Louis to be an honest man. After being present, one day, at a Cabinet Council in 1790, he supped with his relative, Madame Dupaty, (widow of the President of the Parlement of Bordeaux,) to whom he described what had occurred, and how the views of the commissioners present coincided with those of His Majesty. "I can certify," said Cordorcet, in his usual tremulous and uncertain voice, "I

can certify that Louis XVI. is a very clever, and an *honest* man, for everything that he said to us respecting the welfare and tranquillity of Paris and of the provinces, could only have been known and said by a good prince." Those were the very words of a man who afterwards voted for the death of the King! But what an end was in store for Condorcet himself!

As he belonged to the section of the Girondists, and was a staunch friend of Brissot, Vergniaud and others, Condorcet with his upright and severe principles sided, of course, with them, and abhorred the blood-thirsty maxims of Robespierre and his crew. His speeches and writings were quite sufficient to get him "proscribed" by the stronger and infamous party, and he fled, addressing to his wife a letter in which he explains his position in two lines of verse, signifying that having to choose between being an oppressor or a victim, "he chose the latter, and its misfortunes, leaving crime to his adversaries."

He took refuge in the house of an old and valued friend, Madame Vernet, where he remained securely hidden for no less than eight months. But, one day, on glancing

over a newspaper, he found that it had become punishable with death to shelter a "proscrit." He resolved, at once, to quit her roof. He did so in the night, during her absence from home, and wandered away outside Paris, not knowing where to rest his head. For several days he sought an asylum, first in one place then in another, sleeping at night in the Quarries at Montrouge, or in the wood of Verrières, hiding himself in the picturesque neighbourhod of Clamart, or in that of Fontenay aux Roses, the name of which secluded spot, within a short distance of Paris, is no less beautiful than the place itself even at the present day.

Suard and his wife, old and staunch friends of Condorcet, lived at Fontenay aux Roses (as the poet Florian had done before them.) The unhappy "proscrit" remembered his visits to them with his own young and beautiful wife, as fair as the flowers around. Then his thoughts turned to his daughter whom he loved more fondly still. But he had voted for the death of the King! and since that time Monsieur and Madame Suard had become strangers to him.

In spite of this, Condorcet decided upon

knocking at their door. His forlorn appearance and tattered clothes rendered him almost unrecognisable, and some moments of anxious uncertainty elapsed before he could make himself known. "Give me some bread," he exclaimed, "I am dying of hunger!" Suard recognised the voice. He immediately found an excuse for sending his only servant into the village on an errand, then turned round and embraced his unfortunate companion. He brought in some bread and cheese, and some wine; and after having partaken of this Condorcet could relieve his mind of a burden that oppressed him. He acknowledged Suard to be his best friend; he beseeched him to watch over and befriend his beloved daughter; he gave him a sum of six hundred francs to be delivered to Madame de Condorcet, and at the same time made him fully acquainted with the frightful nature of his position. Finally, he entrusted to Suard the MS. work which he had left at the house of Madame Vernet (the posthumous work already alluded to), and begged him to see to its publication.

In the next place, they discussed together as to the possibility of obtaining a passport from Paris, which would enable Condorcet to gain the

coast and embark. It was arranged that Suard should proceed at once to Paris, and endeavour to obtain from some of their former friends a letter that would enable the unfortunate author to escape the tyranny of the Communists, and that Condorcet should return to fetch the letter the next day. Before leaving, he asked Suard, as a last favour, to give him some snuff and a copy of Horace. These requests being complied with, he left the house, apparently happy, in spite of his wretched position, having found a sincere, trustworthy friend.

On quitting the comfortable little house at Fontenay aux Roses, Condorcet took his course towards the limestone quarrries, in which he remained hidden for the rest of the day. He was to return for his passport the following morning.

In the meantime Suard went to Paris, and obtained without much difficulty the desired documents, namely, an invalid pass, to which he added another, obtained from the celebrated Dr. Cabanis, an old friend of Condorcet, signifying that the invalid was returning home after leaving the hospital where he had been under his (Cabanis) care. This certificate alone was better for the purpose than any official passport.

When Condorcet reached the quarries he found that he had only taken one piece of bread in his pocket, and towards evening he became desperately hungry. In spite of the danger, he decided upon making his way to a low tavern at Clamart, near the woods. In this secluded tavern, when he entered, there were only two persons besides himself; a woman, the hostess of the place, and a man. The latter happened to be one of those wretched individuals who grovel in the lowest depths of society, and who are ever on the alert to make some sordid gain, even by selling the blood of one of their own comrades in misery. The individual in question was not a government spy, but a voluntary spy, ready for the sake of a few copper coins to compromise the first person he met with. The unfortunate Condorcet—just as he was about to procure a safe exit from the country—had fallen unawares into a den of the worst description. His dishevelled hair, his uncouth appearance, were well calculated to attract attention anywhere. The ruffian in the tavern never took his eyes from him; but sat motionless examining his every gest and feature, from the moment he entered. Condorcet was ravenously hungry, besides being broken down

by fatigue from his walk, and want of rest. The anxiety of his position told upon his intellectual features, tanned by exposure to the air, and his characteristic hesitation of speech was more pronounced than usual. Whilst he devoured an omelette which he had ordered, he did not perceive that the man and woman above named were in earnest conversation about him.* As he finished the last mouthful, the woman approached him and said in a brutal manner: "Pay me for what you have had."

Condorcet, without reflecting, drew from his waistcoat a little white satin pocket-book, embroidered with silk. In those days of assignats, the pocket book had replaced the ordinary purse. At the sight of this elegant little article, both the hostess and her ruffianly companion were struck with amazement.

"Who are you?" demanded the voluntary spy in an insolent manner.

After a moment's hesitation, which was fatal

* The author of a recent work entitled "Five Years' Penal Servitude," says that a prolonged residence in prison taught him that humanity was composed of three distinct classes of beings, "men, women, and beasts." The two individuals mentioned in the text would evidently have come under the latter category.

to him, Condorcet replied that he was in the service of M. de Séjour—using the name of one of his friends, a member of the Academy of Sciences. This distinguished philosopher who was also a counsellor at the Cour des Aides, was a particular friend of our "proscrit," so that the latter could answer any questions that might be put to him regarding the household to which he asserted that he belonged. However, his undecided manner of speech, heightened the suspicions of the depraved lout who was acting as spy, and very little time elapsed before he found himself arrested and conducted to the police office of the district, at Bourg la Reine, where he could give no more satisfactory account of his social position, and was, accordingly, thrown into prison as a vagabond.

On leaving Suard's hospitable door, Condorcet had made a curious speech to his friend, with reference to the infamous rascals by whom he and the other proscribed Girondists were pursued. He said: "I do not fear them as long as I am an hour a-head of them." Suard did not understand the exact meaning of these words.

The morning after his imprisonment (24th of March, 1794) he was found dead in his cell.

He had taken a poison composed of *stramonium* and *opium*, prepared for several eminent men of this period by their friend Dr. Cabanis, before mentioned. The Archbishop of Sens had used it to avoid the scaffold. It was known as the *Poison of Cabanis*, and before the discovery of prussic acid, was the most subtle and least painful of all known poisons. It produced death, resembling apoplexy, within an hour, and without the slightest suffering. This celebrated poison was composed of a powerful extract of *Datura stramonium*, or thorn apple, combined with opium of the finest quality; it formed a little brown ball about the size of a child's marble; the proper dose was prescribed upon a slip of paper, in which it was enveloped. Condorcet carried this poison upon his person since the hour of misfortune had overtaken him. The surgeon who was called to the prison to examine the body of this "unknown man" did not hesitate to pronounce that he had died in the night from a fit of apoplexy. The same verdict was pronounced upon the Archbishop. It has been stated upon very good authority that the Emperor Napoleon I. carried the same poison upon his person for a long time, and that he

used it at Fontainebleau, but without success, owing perhaps to a faulty preparation or to a mistake in the dose. The wife of the Maréchal Junot, the talented Duchess d'Abrantès has stated this in her "Memoirs," but it is nevertheless open to serious doubt. However the effects of such a poison may have been uncertain occasionally, they would depend entirely on the care bestowed upon its preparation; stramonium and opium being considered somewhat antagonistic in their action upon the economy.

Thus died Condorcet on the 24th of March; and on the 5th of April following, the chiefs of his party, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Hérault de Séchelles, Lacroix, Philepeaux, Fabre d'Eglantine and Chabot, were all executed in the course of a few hours. Without the dose of stramonium he would have shared their fate. To Condorcet's "Memoirs" we are indebted for one or two anecdotes contained in this work. No one was better acquainted with the misery which surrounded those who, unlike himself, had succeeded in gaining foreign shores. In the streets of London, he tells us, whilst the King Louis XVI. was a prisoner in his own palace, a camel might be seen led about by an old man, followed by a boy

who had charge of a monkey, whilst a young girl went through certain perilous athletic performances on a piece of carpet. A French emigrant who was, one day, looking on with emotion depicted upon his countenance, said to an English gentleman: "Look there! there is one of the best families in Britanny."

On another occasion, at Hamburgh, a piece was announced at the theatre; it was "Les Chasseurs et la Laitière," in which French refugees played certain parts. The manager appeared before the foolights and addressing the public said, "Ladies and gentlemen, it is impossible to give the piece announced this evening, as the young gentleman who was to have played the bear has suddenly left for La Vendée."

XXXII.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

IT is inconvenient, not to say impossible, for an author to be constantly referring to the authorities upon which he rests his facts. In the course of the present volume it would have caused much inconvenience, also, to the reader; therefore I have given in the following short bibliography, the names of the principal works which I have consulted, relating to this most interesting period of history.

Brissot de Warville. "Mémoires sur la Révolution Française." 3 vols.

Lafayette. "Mémoires, Correspondances et Manuscrits du Général Lafayette," publiés par sa famille. 12 vols.

Mirabeau. "Mémoires sur sa Vie, Louis XVI. et la Révolution Française," publiés par son fils. 12 vols.

Levasseur. "Mémoires sur la Révolution Francaise," (époque de la terreur). 5 vols.

Beaulieu. "Essais Historiques, etc."

L'Abbé Georgel. "Mémoires." The author was vicaire-général to the Cardinal de Rohan.

Prudhomme. "Les Révolutions de Paris." A periodical work; the author outlived the Revolution, he was an intimate friend of the unfortunate Camille Desmoulins.

Bertrand de Moleville. "Annales, etc." We are indebted to him for some account of the prisons and September massacres, from which he escaped most miraculously, by addressing one of the hired ruffians in his native patois.

Madame Roland. "Mémoires." Original edition.

" " "Lettres Autographes adressées à Bancal des Issarts." 1 vol.

Dauban. "Etude sur Madame Roland, suivie de ses Lettres à Buzot, etc." 1 vol.

" "Mémoires de Madame Roland, avec Notes, etc." 1 vol. 1863.

Faugère. "Mémoires de Madame Roland, écrit durant sa Captivité." 1 vol. 1863.

Madame Campan. "Mémoires." English translation. 2 vols.

Journiac de Saint Méard. "Rélation des Massacres de Septembre." The author is the young officer mentioned by Thiers who escaped through his exceedingly bold conduct before the municipals at the prison. An exceedingly painful little work.

L'Abbé l'Enfant (sometimes termed *Le père l'Enfant*, confessor to Louis XVI.) "Mémoires." 2 vols. 18mo. a rare work.

Barbaroux. "Mémoires," (written from a Republican point of view.)

Meilhan. "Mémoires, etc." The author, one of the proscribed Girondists, and afterwards a Senator. In this volume he

describes his miraculous escape during the Reign of Terror by wandering on foot from Bordeaux to Bayonne.

Bougeart A. "Danton ; Documents Authentiques." 1 vol.

" " "Marat, l'Ami du Peuple, &c." 2 vols.

Lamartine (*A. de*). "Histoire des Girondins." 4 vols.

" " "Les Constituents." 1789. 1 vol.

Barthélemy. Douze journées de la Révolution. 1 vol.

Madame d'Abrantès. "Mémoires, ou Souvenirs Historiques, etc." 3 vols.

" " "Histoire des Salons de Paris." 6 vols., of which the three first only treat of the period embraced by the reign of Louis XVI.

Allonville. "Mémoires Secrètes de 1770 à 1830." 2 vols.

" " "Mémoires tirés des Papiers d'un Homme d'Etat, etc." 3 vols.

Thiers. "Histoire de la Révolution Française." English Trans. Bentley's ed., in 5 vols.

Berryer. "Souvenirs de 1774 à 1838." 2 vols. 18mo. A most entertaining work, written from a Conservative point of view, but loaded with legal technicalities.

Madame de Staël. "Mélanges." 1 vol.

" " "Considérations sur les principaux évènements de la Révolution Française." 3 vols. 18mo.

Joseph Droz. "Histoire du Règne de Louis XVI." 1 vol.

Bacourt. "Correspondance entre le Comte de Mirabeau et le Comte Lamark." (1789—1791). 2 vols.

Michelet. "Le Peuple." 2 vols.

" "Histoire de la Révolution Française.

De Lescurle. "La Princesse de Lamballe, sa Vie et sa Mort, d'après des Documents Inédits" 1 vol. A recent work. During her short stay in England, the Princess visited Bath and Brighton where she made many friends and admirers, as well as in London.

Barante. "Histoire de la Convention Nationale." 6 vols.

Capefigue. "Louis XVI. et Diplomates Européens. 1 vol.
,, "L'Europe pendant la Révolution Française." 1 vol.
" "Louis XVI, son Administration, etc." 1 vol.
Barère. "Mémoires recueillis par H. Carnot." 4 vols.
A. Mignet. "Histoire de la Révolution Française," 1789 à 1814. This is a popular illustrated work in 1 vol.
Cléry. "A Journal of the Occurrences at the Temple during the Confinement of Louis XVI." Published at London, 1798. This exceedingly painful work, with two rough illustrations, was translated from the original MS. by Mr. Dallas. It is now very rare.
Général Dermoncourt. "La Vendée et Madame." A romantic work.
Grégoire (A.) "Mémoires de l'Exécuteur des Hautes Œuvres." 1 vol. very rare.
Juste. "Histoire Populaire de la Révolution." 1 vol.
Madame du Barri (the French spelling is *du Barry*). "Memoirs." 4 vols. English translation. This must be considered to a great extent a romantic work; but is exceedingly interesting when compared with others.
Etienne Dumont. "Souvenirs de Mirabeau." 1 vol.
Méry. "André Chénier." 2 vols.
E. Hamel. "Histoire de St Just." 2 vols.
Le Comte de Robiano. "Marie Antoinette à la Conciergerie; Fragment Historique." 1 vol. This gentleman is also the author of an excellent work on Animal Magnetism.
De Lomenie. "Beaumarchais et son Temps, etc." 2 vols. Paris. Levy, 1855.
Héricourt. "La Révolution de Thermidor d'après les Sources Originales et les Documents Inédits." 1 vol.
Wouters. "Histoire Chronologique de la République et de l'Empire, etc. (1789—1815). 1 vol. with maps and plans, to which is added "Annales Napoléoniennes, etc."

Arneth. "Correspondance Secrète entre Marie Thérèse et le Comte Mercy d'Argenteau avec des lettres de Marie Thérèse et de Marie Antoinette." 3 vols.

Grimm. "Correspondance Littéraire, etc." The entire work can still be purchased through MM. Hachette for about 130 francs.

Le Marquis de Bouillé. "Mémoires, etc."

Général Dumouriez. "Mémoires et Correspondance Inédits." 2 vols.

Louis Blanc. "Histoire de la Révolution Française." Belg. edition in 3 vols.

Alexandre Sorel. "Le Couvent des Carmes et le Séminaire de St. Sulpice pendant la Terreur." Second Edition, 1 vol. The fullest and most horrible description is given here of the massacre of the priests on the 1st of September, 1792, in the Carmes. There were 115 victims, among whom were four or five bishops, and some English and Irish named Darby, Darcy, Darden, Goddard, Harrop, Marshall, Moses, Penny, Stewart, Ganellan, Malone, Langan and Ward

Condorcet. "Mémoires."

Duclos. "Mémoires Secrètes sur les règnes de Louis XV. et Louis XVI." The author died on the 26th of March, 1772. His well known work "Considérations sur les Mœurs," ranks next to La Bruyère's "Caractères."

Bézanval (*Baron de*) "Mémoires, etc." This gentleman was lieutenant-colonel of the unfortunate Swiss Guards.

L'Abbé Jean Louis Soulavie. "Mémoires sur le Règne de Louis XVI." He also wrote "Memoirs of the Duc de Richelieu." Napoleon I. had a very high opinion of the first-named work.

Hué. "Mémoires." The King's attendant, until replaced by Cléry at the Temple.

Cadet de Gassicourt. "Le Tombeau de Jacques Molay." 1

vol. 1797. A work now rare, in which the author, an eminent chemist, endeavours to determine the influence of Masonic Societies upon the events of the Revolution.

Anonymous Works. " Mémoire Biographique, littéraire et politique de Mirabeau." 12 vols.

" " " Mémoires de Fleury de la Comédie Française, 1757—1820. 6 vols.

" " " Idée Singulière d'un bon Citoyen," Paris 1770. This is a pamphlet attributed to Turgot (before he was called to office); a *tirade* against the expenses at Versailles at the time of the king's marriage, said to have amounted to *twenty millions* of francs.

" Inventaire des Cultures de Trianon," par le Comte de Jaubert, Paris, 1876. A copy exists in the Library of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, presented in 1877 by the Minister of Public Works.

Taine. " L'Ancien Régime." English translation, by John Durand. 1 vol. 1876. A splendid work.

Jules Clarétie. " Camille Desmoulins, etc." 1 vol. Translated into English by Mrs. Cashel Hoey. 1876. An interesting and clever work.

Yonge, Professor. " Life of Marie Antoinette." This recent work comprises a sketch history of the Revolution. It is conscientiously written, and constitutes a valuable work of reference.

The number of periodicals, journals, pamphlets, and letters, which appeared in Paris, Marseilles, Lyons, &c., in the reign of Louis XVI., and during the period of the Revolution, almost surpasses anything that can be imagined. The celebrated Abbé Rive, for some time librarian to the Duc de la Vallière, and the collector of

some valuable MSS. that got dispersed in so curious a manner after his death, issued no less than thirty-four pamphlets in the single year, 1791, in which he died. Besides Prudhomme's journal, mentioned above, there was the "Gazette des Tribunaux" and "L'Assemblée Nationale," (afterwards known as the "Journal de Perlet") and the celebrated journal of the unfortunate Camille Desmoulins, "Le Vieux Cordelier;" to which we could add a list of some forty to fifty others, more or less important in their day. We may mention more paticularly the journal published under the title of the "Indépendans," which attained its zenith about the year 1792, the principal writers for which were Suard, Lacretelle, Condorcet, and Madame de Staël. Complete collections of these are now very rare, or rather not to be seen at all, and even odd numbers are difficult to procure in the largest public libraries. Occasionally, however, fragments of them crop up in modern publications, as is the case, for instance, in "Les Cartons d'un Ancien Bibliothécaire," issued at Draguignan in 1875 by Robert Reboul, a collection of papers, including Manuscripts, left by Jauffret, the distinguished librarian of the Public Library at Marseilles. This institution, which was set on foot as a pro-

ject in 1789, but definitely opened only in 1805, now contains upwards of sixty thousand volumes and nearly one thousand MSS.*

Among the purely scientific works which relate more especially to this period we should mention: G. Cuvier's "Rapport sur les progrès des Sciences Naturelles, depuis 1789;" which was presented to the Government on the 6th of February, 1808, and afterwards published at Paris in 1828. Though a very valuable work in many respects, it is a mere sketch throughout, and does infinite injustice to several authors of eminence, such as Charles Bonnet, the great naturalist of Geneva, whose name is scarcely mentioned. Great shortcomings are also observed in the Chemical, Mineralogical and Medical sections of this volume. With all these drawbacks, the work which is now become rather rare, is without doubt one of the most valuable contributions to scientific literature.

Another small volume replete with interest to the student of the history of Science in the 18th century, is entitled "Lettres de M. Alexandre

* It was from this library that Dumas the elder obtained the loan of the four little volumes "Mémoires d'Artagnan" by Courtier de Sandras, published in 1704, from which he took his famous novel "Les Trois Mousquetaires."

Volta sur l'Air Inflamable des Marais," translated from the Italian and published at Strasbourg in 1778. These letters are addressed to Charles Joseph Campi, who discovered marsh gas. Campi was an Italian ecclesiastic greatly addicted to scientific observation. They give an accurate idea of the state of physical science during the reign of Louis XVI. A no less important publication in this respect, is the "Journal de Physique de M. l'Abbé Rozier," which appeared for several years, until the editor fell a victim to his aeronautic experiments, precipitated to the earth from a fire balloon which burst into flames, and in which he and a friend had determined to cross the Straits of Dover. The Number for July, 1776 (Vol. VI.) contains a letter by the celebrated Volta on his newly invented Electrophorus.

Other works relating to this particularly fertile period of scientific research are given in the Appendix to my little volume on "Phosphoresence" (1862), and in my work on Meteors, &c., (London, 1867). Ferdinand Hœfer's interesting little volume, "La Chimie enseignée par la Biographie de ses Fondateurs," published at Paris in 1865, contains some valuable notes on Lavoisier and his contemporaries.

Four excellent volumes of Spallanzani's researches were issued many years ago in an English dress, translated from the Italian. The first of these (containing the author's later researches) consist of two volumes, issued in 1789 by John Murray, "No. 32, Fleet Street," London, and entitled "Dissertations relative to the Natural History of Animals and Vegetables," a new edition corrected and enlarged. The translation is by Thomas Beddoes of Oxford. The other two volumes were issued at Edinburgh in 1803, (having already appeared in French, Paris, 1787) entitled "Tracts on the Natural History of Animals and Vegetables," and comprise the *earlier* researches (those published as "Sagio di Obs. Microscop.," Modena, 1767, and a few others). This translation is by J. G. Dallyell, published by Creech and Constable of Edinburgh, and Longman and Rees, London. In England, the works of Priestley, Black, Cavendish and others were chiefly read to learned societies and published in their Transactions; Priestley's "Experiments and Observations on different kinds of Air," in four volumes, and his "History of Electricity," are among the most important volumes issued at this interesting period of scientific research. The original work of Lavoisier, the

"Elementary Treatise on Chemistry," in which Europe saw for the first time with astonishment the entire new system of Chemistry, is entitled, "Traité élémentaire de Chimie, présenté dans un ordre nouveau, et d'après les découvertes modernes," par A. L. Lavoisier, Paris, 1789, 2 vols. 8vo. It was preceded by his celebrated "Opuscules physiques et chimiques," Paris, 1773. The "Œuvres de Lavoisier," a magnificent edition of which was issued from the Imprimerie Impériale in 1862, constitute a magnificent monument to this unfortunate man.

The latest work that has appeared in France upon the period occupied by this volume is by M. Domenget, and is published under the title of "Fouquier Tinville et le Tribunal Révolutionaire," Paris, 1878, 1 vol. It is a work full of horrors drawn from authentic sources, chiefly from official documents, and concludes with an account of the execution of that rascal and his principal ascociates. We have remarked that in some older works, the name of this atrocious scoundrel is written "Tainville," and it has been thus spelt in the foregoing pages. Little or nothing appears to be known about the fellow, except that he was originally a thief and a murderer of the blackest type. Nothing that

we have stated, or even hinted at, in the course of the present volume, can give the faintest idea of the horrible scenes depicted in this little book, which we mention only as a literary curiosity of an exceedingly disgusting type. Still, it is well that men should, occasionally, be made aware of the excesses to which their brutal passions can lead them, even in countries that are generally supposed to be highly civilized.

In concluding this short bibliographical sketch, I need scarcely inform the reader of its numerous shortcomings, especially as regards the scientific literature of the period of Louis XVI. I find it impossible, in a work of this nature, to do even a semblance of justice to this portion of the subject. The numerous and important works of Linnæus, Labilliardière, Dolomieu, Benjamin Franklin, Nollet, Buffon, Lavoisier, Priestley, Black, Bergmann, Bœrhaave, and many others, would have occupied far more space than could have been afforded here. It was under the influence of all these wonderful literary productions, that the subjects of Louis XVI. appeared to live. The refining

influence of literature, and science, and music seems to have been never so strongly developed at any other period—yet, in spite of it, we see the Monarchy and the Government drifting into the utmost disorder. But the great, good, and learned works brought to light shortly before, and during the period of which we have been writing, were not read by the public at large, nor even, by the more enlightened section of the public. A few select minds, only, enjoyed them and benefited by them. It was not until some considerable time *after* the Great Revolution, that the influence of these productions began to spread and to improve mankind throughout the whole of Europe. It is to this influence, far more than to the Revolution itself, that must be ascribed the good that appears to have been derived from the latter.

THE END.

LONDON:
Printed by A. Schulze, 13, Poland Street. (S. & H.)

Works by the Same Author.

Familiar Letters on Some Mysteries of Nature, and Discoveries in Science.

Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of Celebrated Violinists.

Meteors, Aërolites and Falling Stars.

The Utilization of Minute Life, Practical Studies on Insects, Crustacea, Mollusca, Worms, Polypes, Infusoria and Sponges.

Phosphorescence, or the Emission of Light by Minerals, Plants and Animals.

La Force Catalytique: Etudes sur les Phénomènes de Contact. (Gold Medal Soc. Hollandaise des Sciences, Haarlem, 1858.)

Application de certaines propriétés Optiques des Corps à l'Analyse Chimique. (Gold Medal Soc. Roy. des Sc. Méd. et Nat. de Bruxelles, 1868.)

MADAME ROLAND ON THE SCAFFOLD.

The scaffold had its etiquette, writes Matilde Blind, and ladies were privileged to take precedence of men in death. The brave woman, wishing to spare her companion the horror of seeing her blood spilt, asked the executioner to let him go first. Samson demurred, it being contrary to custom. But when she said to him, with a smile, "Come, you cannot refuse the last request of a lady," he succumbed. She waited calmly; and, with her wonted quickness of step, she mounted the short steep ladder leading from the cart to the platform of the scaffold. Then, her shining eyes turned to the colossal statue of Liberty lately erected near it, she said, bowing to the goddess of her worship, "O Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name!" Swiftly the axe clanked down; swiftly the heroic heart ceased to beat. It had not once quickened with fear. A witness, who daily haunted the place of execution, has borne strange testimony to Madame Roland's Spartan courage. When her head was severed from her body, he saw two enormous jets of blood thrown up from her mutilated trunk—an exceptional fact, for habitually only a few scant drops oozed slowly from the veins, whose blood had all been driven to the heart by apprehension.

